

Translating humorous elements from English into Finnish in the American comedy series
Veep and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*

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ABSTRACT

This pro gradu thesis examines the translation of humor in audiovisual texts, specifically the American television comedies *Veep* and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, from the original source language (English) into the subtitled target language (Finnish). The focus of analysis lies on comparing humor (mostly verbal) in the source and target versions, the inevitable changes and differences between the two versions as well as the reasons behind those changes. Humor translation and subtitling as an audiovisual translation method are also key themes discussed in this thesis. The humorous elements found in the analyzed episodes are categorized using an eight-level taxonomy originally formulated by Zabalbeascoa (1993; 1996) and later elaborated by Martínez-Sierra (2005), whose methodology is utilized in this study. The analyzed humorous instances are presented in card-form, in which the original lines and their Finnish subtitled versions are displayed along with the humorous load of both versions. Each instance is analyzed thoroughly and the differences are discussed in detail. The study finds that despite the reputation of humor translation as a difficult field, in the case of English to Finnish translation not too much of the original is lost in translation, and when loss occurs, it is more often than not due to linguistic differences and constraints of subtitling.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tässä pro gradu -tutkielmassa tarkastellaan huumorin kääntämistä audiovisuaalisissa mediateksteissä. Amerikkalaiset televisiokomediasarjat *Veep* (Suomessa: *Rouva varapresidentti*) ja *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* sekä erityisesti näissä sarjoissa esiintyvä huumori ovat tämän tutkimuksen keskiössä, kuten myös huumorin kääntäminen ja tekstittäminen audiovisuaalisena käännösmetodinä. Itse analyysin kohteena ovat edellä mainittujen komediasarjojen humoristiset kohtaukset ja näiden kohtauksien alkuperäisissä englanninkielisissä lähdeversioissa sekä tekstitetyissä suomenkielisissä versioissa esiintyvät humoristiset elementit. Nämä elementit ovat vitsin tyypistä riippuen jaettu kahdeksaan eri kategoriaan Zabalbeascoan (1993; 1996) ja Martínez-Sierran (2005) kehittämän taksonomian mukaan. Humoristiset kohtaukset esitellään korteissa, joissa niiden alkuperäiset englanninkieliset puhutut vuorosanat (lähdeversio) sekä suomenkieliset tekstitykset (kohdeversio) ovat esillä. Tarkastelussa ovat näiden versioiden väliset eroavaisuudet ja muutokset, kuten myös samanlaisuudet, sekä näihin muutoksiin johtavat syyt. Tutkielman tuloksena on, että vaikka huumorin kääntäminen mielletään haasteelliseksi, suurimmassa osassa tapauksista alkuperäiset vitsit saavuttavat myös suomenkielisen kohdeyleisön ilman suurempia ongelmia, ja että, kun ongelmia esiintyy, ne johtuvat tyypillisesti kielellisistä eroavaisuuksista tai itse tekstitysten rajoitteista.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Comedy is certainly one of the oldest forms of entertainment and it still enjoys its position as one of the more popular modes of entertainment in modern society. Be it in the form of stand-up comedy, theater plays, comedy films or television, people will seek to watch it, hear it, and perform it, as they have done throughout history. The roots of comedy are in fact planted so deep in the history of civilization that it would not even be incorrect to make the ever so cliché statement of ancient Romans and how they enjoyed comedy thousands of years ago. This study, however, will not concentrate on the history of comedy or the psychoanalytical reasons behind people's fondness of it. It will instead concentrate solely on the time after televisions entered the living rooms of people all around the world and international audiovisual broadcasting became not only possible, but the norm. The reasons as to why people enjoy comedy are also insignificant when it comes to this particular case study. Zamir (2014) writes that "comedy induces laughter and this is why we wish to watch it" (p. 180), and this statement serves as a good enough of an explanation for the purpose of this thesis. *Comedy*, *television*, and *entertainment* play the key roles in this study, along with *culture* and *linguistics*. When blended together the former three form what is known as situational comedy, and the latter two offer lenses through which to examine it. By utilizing humor and translation studies this master's thesis aims to examine the humor in two American television series, the situational comedy *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* and the political satire *Veep*, with a focus on the subtitled Finnish translations of the humorous elements.

Dalton and Linder (2016, p. xv) state that "[t]he pervasiveness and persuasiveness of television programming has continued to evolve and now may be accessed on a variety of media in almost any imaginable locale." To be able to, as a Finnish viewer, watch American television series on Finnish television channels, proves this statement to be true. To further prove the *persuasiveness* and reach of televised entertainment, the Finnish viewers do not have to be fluent English speakers in order to be able to follow these programmes. In fact, the audience does not need to have any English knowledge whatsoever, as foreign films and series that are shown in Finland are almost always subtitled in Finnish. Subtitling renders this type of audiovisual entertainment accessible to the foreign audiences as practically no English language skills are required of the viewers in order for them to be able to follow the plot. But the question is: are the two lines of text on the bottom of the

screen able to convey everything? Naturally there are differences in the source and target languages: sometimes less, for example when translating from a Germanic language to another, but other times more. This is the case with English and Finnish, as one is a Germanic language and the other a much different Finno-Ugric language. The differences in grammar and vocabulary as well as differences of the source and target cultures may and most likely will lead to difficulties in the translation process, sometimes even making something untranslatable. In these cases it is up to the translator to produce new, culturally fitting variants of the element or simply leave them untranslated.

It should be mentioned that as I am a viewer and not a translator, the observations presented in this study are made from the point of view of a member of the audience and not a professional translator. The translators of the chosen episodes will be credited when the information is available, and though their work is an important part of the data and will be analyzed thoroughly, I will refrain from critiquing their translation choices. In short, this study inspects how the humorous elements of the two chosen television series have been translated, not the quality of the translations. It is important to note that in this study the terms *translator* and *subtitler* will be used interchangeably, because in the case of subtitling foreign television series translation from one language to another occurs in the process. It has been established time and time again that translating humor and comedy can prove to be a difficult task (cf. Patrick Zabalbeascoa, 2005) but how much exactly do the obstacles affect the final translation? This is the question that I aim to answer in this study by examining the translations of the humorous elements in the aforementioned series. For my bachelor's thesis (Karjalainen, 2017) I conducted a similar case study using the *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* episode "Tactical Village" as my data. For this master's thesis I will be continuing forward, inspecting these two series and four episodes in total. By increasing the amount of inspected humorous elements I hope to be able to answer my research questions with more certainty.

The approach I selected is the same as Martínez-Sierra (2005) adopted in examining the differences between the original and the Spanish-dubbed versions of the American comedy cartoon *The Simpsons* using a taxonomy of jokes which he created specifically for his study. I used this approach for my bachelor's thesis and found that it suited well with the type of analysis I conducted

and thus, I have therefore chosen to use it again in my master's thesis. Martínez-Sierra's taxonomy is presented in subsection 3.3.

The humor in the two series, *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* and *Veep*, is somewhat different, though both are so-called half-hour comedies (including commercial breaks). Dalton and Linder (2014) write that the half-hour slot is probably a part of the sitcom's formula for success, as it is easy to devote 22 minutes to a story in-between other obligations (p. 321). The shows chosen differ from each other enough that they gather a different audience—not to say a viewer could not watch and enjoy both—but especially with *Veep* this is something that needs to be considered: the show is made for a certain audience. As the show revolves around fictional American politicians and their work, it is important for the viewer to have at least a basic understanding of how the United States government operates. When it comes to *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, the audience is much broader because the show requires very little if any knowledge of the United States police force, for example. So in short, though both shows are American comedies, they are of different settings and use a different register as one is a police procedural sitcom and the other a political satire. *Veep* has been categorized as a sitcom before, but there seems to be some debate concerning its genre.

American audiovisual entertainment, mainly television and film, dominates the television channels in Finland. Salmi (2009) argues that nearly 90% of all movies shown in Finland are American, and that the situation for television series is not much different (p. 64). In a report conducted by Juntunen and Lagus (2015) of the Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications it is ascertained that 76% of all fictional foreign television series and 77% of all movies shown in Finnish television originated in the United States (pp. 76-77). These percentages are not as high as Salmi (2009, p. 64) suggests, but they are high nevertheless. Juntunen and Lagus (2015) establish that in 2014 fictional Finnish television series only covered 2% of all television programming, while fictional foreign series covered 20% (pp. 75-76). American television gained popularity in Finland early on. I grew up watching American television series of the 1990s, including hit sitcoms such as *Friends* and *Seinfeld* (the latter also starring Julia Louis-Dreyfus of *Veep*). The presence of comedy—for the most part American—has been constant throughout my life and I have certainly developed a fondness for it. This is why it feels natural for comedy to be playing a role in my pro gradu thesis as I get to study such phenomena that are interesting to me personally, as well as

showcase the skills I have acquired during my studies in English Philology. I find it particularly fascinating to conduct this kind of a study with the humor of *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* and *Veep* as the focus of analysis, perhaps because I personally like both of the series and the humor in them, and the aspect of comedy paired with that of humor translation makes for an interesting combination for research purposes.

The data of this study is introduced in the next section, in which I give a short overview of the series and the episodes, and in the third section I go over the analytical framework with an emphasis on humor translation (3.1) and subtitling (3.2). In the subsection 3.3 the taxonomy of humorous elements is presented, and following that the analysis in the fourth section is divided into three categories: elements containing no loss of humorous load (4.1), those containing some loss of humorous load (4.2) and finally ones containing significant loss of humorous load (4.3). A comparison of the humor in the two series follows after the analysis (4.4). The findings are presented and discussed in the fifth section, which is followed by the sixth and final section, the conclusion.

2. DATA

In this master's thesis I will be looking at two episodes of two different American comedy television series, *Veep* and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, and analyzing the translation of humor within the shows. I have access to both shows on DVD.

I chose the HBO original series *Veep*, which is a half-hour political satire comedy series created by Armando Iannucci. It follows the life and times of the fictional Vice President of the United States, Selina Meyer, and her staff. *Veep* has gathered praise from critics and during its six years on the air it has been awarded 17 Primetime Emmy Awards. However, the reason why I chose *Veep* lies not in its many awards but rather the fact that the language used in the show is occasionally rather difficult to translate, forcing the subtitler to either omit words and sentences, drastically change them or come up with Finnish alternatives. For example, the dialogue of *Veep* is fast-paced which alone forces the subtitler to leave some parts untranslated. The humor of the show varies from creative cursing to pop-culture references, which is why it works well with the type of analysis I am conducting. In the U.S. the show is rated TV-MA for mature audiences (not suitable for teens under 17) mostly because of profanity-laden language. However, the DVD sets that are sold in the Nordic countries have the ratings of 11 for Sweden and Norway, 15 for Denmark and no age restrictions apply in Finland.

As mentioned in the introduction, I conducted a similar case study for my bachelor's thesis and for my data used one episode of the FOX police procedural sitcom *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*. In this master's thesis I will again be looking at *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, although different episodes this time around. The series centers on an immature NYPD detective Jake Peralta and the other detectives of the fictional 99th precinct, and is set in the Brooklyn borough of New York City. The humor in *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* is often based on linguistic aspects, containing a variety of wordplays and puns. In addition, there are many instances of culture-specific humor as well as community-based humor. The wordplays, especially, often prove difficult to translate. Unlike *Veep*, *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* only holds the rating of TV-14 in the U.S. for occasional crude humor, sexual references and some general action one might assume from a police sitcom. In Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, the age rating is 11 and in Finland it is 12.

2.1. VEEP

Veep premiered on HBO on April 22, 2012, and the final episode of the seventh and final season premiered in May 12, 2019. In Finland, YLE TV2 broadcasts the series under the name *Rouva varapresidentti* (literally: Mrs. Vice President) and the series finale is scheduled to air in May 22, 2020. The series is shot in a cinéma-vérité style, which is a method of documentary filmmaking used today in several comedy series, such as *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation*. Such shows are typically shot with a single camera, giving the footage a documentary-like hand-held effect. In *Veep*, however, there is no so called “talking head” footage where the characters communicate directly with the camera, like in *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation*.

The show stars Julia Louis-Dreyfus as Vice President Selina Meyer, Anna Chlumsky as the Vice President’s Chief of Staff Amy Brookheimer, Tony Hale as Meyer’s Personal Aide Gary Walsh, Reid Scott as the VP’s Deputy Director of Communications Dan Egan, Matt Walsh as the VP’s Director of Communications Mike McIntock, and Sufe Bradshaw as Sue Wilson, the Vice President’s assistant as well as Timothy Simons as a White House Liaison Jonah Ryan. *Veep* has received critical acclaim and it has won several major awards, including the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Comedy Series in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Julia Louis-Dreyfus set a record winning the Primetime Emmy for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series for her role as Selina Meyer in six consecutive years beginning in 2012.

I have chosen two episodes to analyze in my master’s thesis. “Nicknames” is the fifth episode of the first season, and it originally aired on May 20, 2012. It was directed by Tristram Shapeero and written by Simon Blackwell and Armando Iannucci. In the episode Selina becomes aware of various nicknames given to her by bloggers and struggles with her “Clean Jobs” bill. The runtime of the episode is 25 minutes, and 43 humorous elements were identified within the episode. The second episode I will be analyzing is “The Vic Allen Dinner”, which is the fourth episode of the second season. Directed by Chris Allison and written by Simon Blackwell and Armando Iannucci, the episode originally aired May 5, 2013. In the episode Selina attends the Vic Allen Dinner and performs a comic song. The runtime of “The Vic Allen Dinner” is 28 minutes, and I identified 38

humorous instances in the episode. Katja Ilmonen of Broadcast Text International provided the Finnish subtitles for "The Vic Allen Dinner" but the subtitler for "Nicknames" is unknown.

The reason I chose these two particular episodes for my study is that, first, I think in both of these episodes the humor that is present in the show is well showcased, and second, I personally like these episodes, although they are not my favorite ones or the ones considered to be the best by fans of the show. By analyzing episodes considered to be the best, or the highest rated, I feel the analysis would likely not be true to the show as a whole.

2.2. BROOKLYN NINE-NINE

The police procedural sitcom *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* premiered on FOX on September 17, 2013, and finished its seventh season on April 23, 2020, with an eighth season scheduled to begin in the fall of 2020. Since 2019 it has aired on NBC and in Finland it has been broadcast on TV5. Similarly to *Veep*, it is shot with a single camera in the cinéma-vérité style. As in *Veep*, the characters of *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* are not aware of the camera, so no "talking head" footage is present in the show. The series stars Andy Samberg as the talented but immature detective Jake Peralta, Joe Lo Truglio as Jake's eccentric best friend detective Charles Boyle, Melissa Fumero as the by-the-book detective Amy Santiago, Stephanie Beatriz as the tough detective Rosa Diaz, and Terry Crews as sergeant Terry Jeffords, a family man. Andre Braugher portrays the stoic captain of the precinct, Raymond Holt, and the comedian Chelsea Peretti stars as Holt's assistant and administrator Gina Linetti. *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* with its diverse cast won the Golden Globe Award for Best Television Series: Musical or Comedy in January 2014, only having aired for four months at the time. Andy Samberg also won the Golden Globe for Best Actor in a TV-comedy or musical. In addition Andre Braugher has gathered three Primetime Emmy Award nominations for his role as Captain Holt.

The two episodes I will be analyzing in my master's thesis are "Halloween" and "Yippie Kayak." The sixth episode of the first season, "Halloween" aired October on 22, 2013, and was directed by Dean Holland and written by Lesley Arfin. In the episode, Jake makes a bet with Captain Holt, insisting that he can steal the Captain's Medal of Valor from Holt's office by midnight. The episode is 22 minutes long and Jutta Jäntti from BTI Studios translated and subtitled the episode. I identified

roughly 22 instances of humor within the episode, including all eight types of jokes introduced in subsection 3.3. “Yippie Kayak” is the tenth episode of the third season and originally aired on December 13, 2015. It was directed by Rebecca Asher and written by Lakshmi Sundaram. In “Yippie Kayak” Jake, Charles and Gina end up in a hostage situation at a mall while Christmas shopping. The runtime of the episode is 21 minutes and the Finnish subtitles were provided by BTI Studios, but it is not mentioned who subtitled the episodes. 24 instances of humor were identified in “Yippie Kayak”.

These episodes are quite different from one another due to the fact that “Halloween” aired quite early on in the show and “Yippie Kayak” almost two seasons later when the dynamics between the characters had changed significantly. The Halloween episode is well liked among the fanbase and there is a similar Halloween episode on each season of the show. “Yippie Kayak” is the Christmas episode of the third season, so the events in both of the episodes take place within one day. I felt that by choosing these episodes a better understanding of the show’s humor might be gained, compared to a scenario where I would have chosen the best rated episodes or my personal favorites, which seem to coincide with the most liked episodes.

3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section I will explain the theoretical background of my study and examine the translation of humor and the issues faced in translating humorous elements, as well as examine the process of subtitling and its benefits and disadvantages. At the end of this section I will present the taxonomy of humorous elements used in the analysis.

3.1. HUMOR TRANSLATION

The type of analysis conducted in this study is quite typical for the field of translation studies, but as it concerns humor as well, it naturally crosses the border over to the field of humor studies. Zabalbeascoa (2005, p. 185) observes that both translation studies and humor studies are interdisciplinary fields of research and that both draw from linguistics, psychology, as well as sociology, among other disciplines, for their descriptions and their theoretical models and constructs. He also mentions that humor and translation studies often overlap and that the findings of one are of interest to the other (Zabalbeascoa, 2005, p. 185).

Jankowska (2009) states that “[i]t is very often said that humor does not travel well” (n.p.). It seems to be the opinion of many. Vandaele (2010, p. 149) argues that humor is known to challenge translators, and that it is often seen as a paradigm case of untranslatability. According to Vandaele (2010), “[t]he relative or absolute untranslatability is generally related to cultural and linguistic aspects” (p. 149). In his study, Zabalbeascoa (2005) discusses several obstacles and restrictions to overcome during a translation process (p. 204). He states that translating humor is complicated because humor often relies on double meaning, ambiguity, metaphorical meanings, and sometimes absurdity, surrealism, or abstract or symbolic meanings (p. 194). Citing Diot (1989, p. 84), Zabalbeascoa (2005) maintains that “[w]hen it comes to translating humor, the operation proves to be as desperate as that of translating poetry” (p. 149). That is, restrictions, though different, apply in translating both humor and poetry. On the former, Vandaele (2010) writes as follows:

The translator of humor has to cope with the fact that the “rules,” “expectations,” “solutions,” and agreements on “social play” are often group- or culture-specific. Parody, for instance, is only accessible to those who are at least vaguely acquainted with the parodied discourse. Imitations of accents are only imitations for those who know the original. (p. 149)

In American comedy series much of the humor is exactly of this group- and culture-specific type. However, because so much of what we see on television, read in newspapers and books, and hear on the radio originates from the United States, even the audience in Finland can be seen as a part of the group or culture to which the humor is catered, at least to some extent. Being modern, western nations, the United States and Finland, among many other countries, share a fondness for a certain type of humor.

Whereas Zabalbeascoa (2005) notes that “[t]he translatability of humor, how well humor travels across languages, and the nature of the barriers, these are the kinds of issues that need to be addressed from both sides of the area where humor and translation overlap” (p. 186), Vandaele (2010) discusses the issues in translating humor by examining the linguistic untranslatability of humor. Vandaele (2010) mentions that scholars typically point at issues that are rooted in linguistic denotation and connotation. According to Vandaele (2010), linguistic denotation “poses translation problems when humor builds on a concept or reality which is specific to a certain language” (p. 150). As an example he uses the comical concept of Oxbridge, a portmanteau of the names of the Oxford and Cambridge universities in the UK, that was used in a joke about these universities. Vandaele (2010) continues that though these types of terms appeal to insiders, they can be problematic from the translator’s point of view, as can lectal varieties of language (which include dialects, idiolects, and sociolects), and metalinguistic or metalingual aspects in which the linguistic form matters, for example puns or wordplays (p. 150). Linguistic connotation, according to Vandaele (2010), causes problems if a certain concept in the source language has a different lectal value than its equivalent in the target language. He wonders what the French equivalent of the Queen’s English would be and how translators should tackle the comedy that is derived from this and other sociolects (Vandaele, 2010, p. 151). There is no single answer or a right answer to these questions, as Vandaele (2010, p. 151) writes that problems like these mean different things for

translators and the various traditions of translation research tradition. Vandaele (2010) cites von Stackelberg (1988) in asking if the translator should be allowed to make us laugh at his own ideas rather than at those of the author. The answer to this seems to be no, as Vandaele (2010, p. 151) claims that this puts more pressure on the translator, which often leads to pessimism and to the acceptance of untranslability. Zabalbeascoa (2005, p. 188), too, reminds that even common sense tells us that translation is about being faithful to the words, the meaning, the contents, the intention, and to the effect of a text. He states that the general rule of translating humor could be summed up as follows: “translate the words and/or the contents and then keep your fingers crossed and hope that the humor will somehow come across with the rest” (Zabalbeascoa, 2005, p. 188).

Delabastita (2004) examines the issues wordplays and puns cause for the translator:

Wordplay exploits the intrinsic structure of the (source) language used and throws into prominence certain characteristics of that language for which it may well be difficult or impossible to find analogues or equivalents in the target language. In that sense, linguistic structure defines the limits of what is technically possible in terms of transposing or reproducing a source-language wordplay. (p. 600)

As mentioned by Delabastita (2004, p. 601) wordplay is difficult to define: however, most definitions agree on the principle that all forms of punning either directly or indirectly derive their special effect from a specific combination of differences of meaning and likenesses of form. Among such linguistic phenomena are for example homophony (same pronunciation, e.g. *base* and *bass*), homography (same spelling, e.g. *row* as ‘a line’ or ‘an argument’ or ‘to propel a boat’), and homonymy (both the same pronunciation and spelling, e.g. *close* as in ‘near’ and ‘to shut down’). As Delabastita (2004, p. 601) states, the greater the structural and typological dissimilarities between the source and the target languages, the more difficult it is to translate wordplays. English and Finnish, for example, are quite different, as one is a Germanic language and the other is a Finno-Ugric language, compared to, for example, Swedish and German, both Germanic and in many aspects quite similar. However, when translating from English into Finnish there is the advantage of Finnish people having, generally speaking, enough knowledge of the source language culture to successfully follow an American or a British comedy television series, for instance. In

some cases this might not apply, even when translating from English, if the source and target languages have very little in common culturally speaking. As Vandaele (2011, p. 182) states, it is clear that verbally expressed humor has quite a bit of variety that stretches from easily translatable humor to very resistant, metalinguistic humor, cultural aspects left aside. Delabastita (2004) concludes that the untranslatability of wordplays is not the absolute dogma that theoreticians and practicing translators often take it to be, though it certainly is “a graded notion” (p. 605).

3.2. SUBTITLING

Subtitling and *dubbing* are the two most common methods when translating audiovisual material from one language to another, and out of these two subtitling is nowadays much more common. As pointed out by Díaz Cintas and Anderman (2007) some European countries such as Germany, Italy, Spain, and France have adopted dubbing as their preferred mode of audiovisual translation (p. 11) despite it being more expensive and time-consuming (Tveit, 2009, p. 93) than subtitling, which is the preferred mode in the UK, Greece, Portugal, and Scandinavia (Díaz Cintas & Anderman, 2007, p. 11). O’Connell (2007) regards subtitling as “an inexpensive, quick, foreign-culture friendly and generally fairly politically correct mode of screen translation” (p. 67). *Voice-over translation* is the third method: the translated text is recorded by an actor or narrator, but the original audio can be heard in the background.

In their examination of dubbing and subtitling for television audiences in Europe, Luyken, Herbst, Langham-Brown, Reid, and Spinhof (1991) define subtitling as “the translation of the spoken (or written) source text of an audiovisual product” (p. 31). Luyken et al. (1991) also provide a more in-depth definition of subtitles, which they describe as:

condensed written translations of original dialogue which appear as lines of text, usually positioned towards the foot of the screen. Subtitles appear and disappear to coincide in time with the corresponding portion of the original dialogue and are almost always added to the screen image at a later date as a post-production activity. (p. 31)

Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) propose that there are three types of subtitles: *intralingual*, *interlingual* and *bilingual* subtitles (p. 14). Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) consider translations of television series from one language to another as interlingual subtitles as this “implies the translation from a source to a target language” (p. 17). Pedersen (2011) complements the definition by arguing that interlingual subtitling is “unique in that the message is not only transferred from one language to another, but also from one mode to another: from the spoken mode (usually) to the written mode” (p. 11).

According to Pedersen (2011) “[t]he *spatial constraints* of subtitling are based on the simple fact that you can only fit a certain number of characters into a line, and that you can rarely use more than two lines in each subtitle” (p. 19, emphasis added). It is important to bear in mind that in subtitling, in addition to the letters, commas, full stops, dashes, exclamation marks and blank spaces are also considered characters. Pedersen (2011, p. 19) notes, that in academic texts concerning subtitling there is variation as to how many characters can be fit into a line. He writes that Schröter (2005, p. 27, as cited in Pedersen, p. 19) states a range of 30–40, while Tveit (2004, p. 107, as cited in Pedersen, 2011, p. 19) gives 38 as a Scandinavian maximum and Luyken et al. (1991, p. 43, as cited in Pedersen, 2011, p. 19) give 28–38 as being the most common figures. Pedersen (2011) points out that “[t]he low figure of 28 stated by Luyken et al. may be caused by its being the oldest of these sources and that for technical reasons, subtitled lines used to be shorter before the process was completely computerized” (p. 19). According to Pedersen (2011) the current Scandinavian guidelines allow a maximum of 35 characters per line, or fewer, if italics are used as they take up more space, but he also reminds that it is usual to come across lines that are longer (p. 19).

Georgakopoulou (2009) states that the length of a subtitle is directly related to its on-air time, and that “[a]ccurate in and out timing is very important and the text in the subtitles should always be in balance with the appropriate reading time setting” (p. 22). The temporal constraints of subtitling are naturally closely connected to the spatial ones, as the subtitle needs to be displayed for a certain amount of time in order for the viewer to be able to read it. This time frame is called *display* or *exposure time*. De Linde and Kay (1999, p. 7) state that most writers consider the average exposure time of a full one-liner to be three seconds and Ivarsson and Carroll (1998, pp. 64-65) suggest it to be six seconds for a two-liner. Gottlieb (2001, p. 20, as cited in Pedersen, 2011, p. 19) introduces

the “12 cps” rule, which means a limit of 12 characters per second. When working in the frame of this limit, a full two-liner of 72 characters should thus stay on the screen for 6 seconds in order for 90% of the hearing viewers to be able to read it, as noted by Pedersen (2011, pp. 19–20). In addition to this, the presentation of the subtitles is also a constraining factor due to the fact that the subtitles may, ideally, only take up to 20 percent of screen space, and as reminded by Georgakopoulou (2009, p. 22), one of the aims in subtitling is legibility, which makes the size of the characters and their position on screen important factors that are to be considered when subtitling.

The *change in mode*, meaning the shift from speech to writing is another factor that presents challenges to the subtitler. Pedersen (2011) notes that “[t]he move from the spoken to the written format brings with it a necessity for editing” (p. 11), which Georgakopoulou (2009) shows to concern the following kinds of items:

Characteristics of spontaneous speech, such as slips of the tongue, pauses, false starts, unfinished sentences, ungrammatical constructions, etc., are difficult to reproduce in writing. The same goes for dialectal, idiolectal and pronunciation features that contribute to the moulding of screen characters. (p. 26)

Many of the things listed often have to do with humor, for example slips of the tongue are often played for laughs in comedy as well as ungrammatical constructions. Dialectal, idiolectal and pronunciation features are common character tropes in film and television and comedy is no exception. In fact, the character of Captain Holt *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* has a certain way of speaking that could be described as monotonous with little prosodic variation, as well as being very grammatically correct, in contrast to the character of Jake, who often makes grammar mistakes and uses slang terms and youth culture references. In *Veep*, the characters frequently use crude and inappropriate language one would perhaps not expect from people in their positions. The English-speaking viewers will easily notice these tropes, but for the viewers that rely on subtitles they will most likely not be as clear, because such linguistic features are often omitted from the subtitles due to the spatio-temporal factors. In some cases these characteristics are relevant to the story and may be included in the translations. Concerning this Georgakopoulou (2009) writes that “[e]lements such as repetitions, padding expressions or even ungrammatical constructions may at times be

optionally condensed rather than omitted, as they may contribute to the textuality of the programme and the character development of the actors” (p. 28). For example, in *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, Captain Holt often corrects Jake’s speech and grammar and though some of these instances are translated, not all of those moments are included in the subtitles because in the end they have very little to do with moving the story forward.

Pedersen (2011) argues that *condensation*, which he provides as a more positive alternative for the term *reduction*, is not a necessary property of subtitles, but notes that it is “[s]o common, in fact, that it is virtually impossible to discuss the process of subtitling without discussing condensation” (p. 20). As already established, all of the verbal content in the source version cannot always be represented in the subtitles due to the constraints of subtitling. Pedersen (2011) writes that “[s]omething usually has to be left out, or rather: the remaining TT [target text] message has to be edited so as to (ideally) say the same thing, in fewer words (or at least in fewer characters), as the ST [source text], and that is what is meant by condensation” (p. 20). Regarding reduction, Gottlieb (2001) states that “[e]specially with up-tempo speech, the subtitler may choose to sacrifice close to 50% of the dialogue ... in order not to exceed the normal television ‘speed limit’” (p. 20), but Pedersen (2011, p. 21) reminds that “the viewers can pick up much of what is lost in the condensation of dialogue through other channels, mainly through pictorial information” and that because viewers are being compensated through other channels, the total loss of information is not as dire as the figures suggest.

Georgakopoulou (2009, p. 27-28) lists seven linguistic elements that she suggests many subtitlers would omit even if the time and space related constraints did not apply. These elements are as follows:

1. Repetitions
2. Names in appellative constructions
3. False starts and ungrammatical constructions
4. Internationally known words, such as ‘yes’, ‘no’, ‘OK’
5. Expressions followed by gestures to denote salutation, politeness, affirmation, negation, surprise, telephone responses, etc.

6. Exclamations, such as ‘oh’, ‘ah’, ‘wow’ and the like
 7. Instances of phatic communion and ‘padding’, often empty of semantic load, their presence being mostly functional speech embellishment aimed at maintaining the desired speech-flow
- (Georgakopoulou, 2009, pp. 27-28).

Georgakopoulou (2009) states that many of these linguistic elements are usually deleted due to the fact that they can be retrieved from the audio track (for example 2, 3, 4, and 6 are such elements). If they were translated and included in the subtitles, Georgakopoulou (2009, p. 28) argues, there would be duplication as the same information would be heard in the audio track and read in the subtitles at the same time.

Georgakopoulou (2009) notes that there is no systematic recipe that should be followed in subtitling and translation: the translator has to decide on the best strategy and every translation issue has to be analyzed thoroughly. Georgakopoulou (2009) reminds that the work of a subtitler involves a great deal of decision-making “to ensure that the audiovisual programme is not bereft of its style, personality, clarity, and that the rhythm and its dramatic progression not hindered” (pp. 29-30). The objective is, after all, to retain and reflect in the subtitles the balance between the image, sound and text of the original (Georgakopoulou, 2009, p. 30).

3.3. TAXONOMY OF AUDIOVISUAL HUMOROUS ELEMENTS

In this subsection I will introduce the taxonomy used in the analysis and discuss the approach chosen for the analysis, for example, how the humorous instances were identified in inspecting the data and how they are presented in this study. Humor is plentiful in both *Veep* and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, and there are many occasions where several different humorous elements take place within one scene. For example, if a character is making puns as well as jokes related to pop culture within one scene, the scene is analyzed as one humorous *instance* that includes several humorous *elements*. When it comes to *Veep* and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, it is quite difficult to decide what exactly counts as a humorous element and what does not, especially since there is no laugh track in the show unlike

in many other American sitcoms. Therefore, I adopted the same approach as De Laurentiis, Perego, De Rosa and Bianchi (2014) present in their book on translating humor in audiovisual texts, primarily films and television series. De Laurentiis et al. (2014, p. 433) chose to include everything that they personally deemed humorous or suspected that the people behind the film intended to be humorous (p. 433). Another approach would have been, as de Laurentiis et al. (2014) suggest, to conduct a study examining what the general public thought to be funny. This approach however, would have been a more complicated and time-consuming way of determining which parts to regard as being humorous and the final result would have represented a very different kind of a study altogether.

Elaborating on a taxonomy of humorous elements that has originally been formulated by Zabalbeascoa (1993; 1996), Martínez-Sierra (2005) examines the English-into-Spanish dubbing of the animated American television series *The Simpsons*. The detailed taxonomy presented by Martínez-Sierra (2005) consists of eight levels, and I will use it to categorize and analyze the humorous elements in the episodes I have chosen to examine in this thesis. In the following, the labels of the elements identified and their definitions come from Martínez-Sierra (2005, pp. 290–292), and the examples provided come from the data examined in this thesis.

1. Community-and-Institutions Elements, which refer to “cultural or intertextual features that are rooted and tied to a specific culture” (Martínez-Sierra, 2005, p. 290). These elements may include celebrities, politicians, organizations, newspapers, books, films etc.

Example: In the *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* episode “Yippie Kayak” Charles saves hostages while wearing a white tank top, which is a reference to Bruce Willis’ character John McClane in the 1988 film *Die Hard*. Upon subduing a thief Charles yells out “Yippie kayak, other buckets!” which is his version of McClane’s famous one-liner “Yippie-ki-yay, motherfucker.”

2. Community-Sense-of-Humor Elements, the topics of which “appear to be more popular in certain communities than in others, an idea that does not imply any cultural specificity, but rather a preference” (Martínez-Sierra, 2005, p. 290). Therefore they are not tied to any

specific cultural elements, but rather to the beliefs, values and experiences of groups of people.

Example: In the *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* episode “Halloween” Amy apologizes to Charles by saying “I’m sorry, I was terrible” and Jake makes a joke that it is the title of her sex tape. Jokes about sex are not considered funny in some cultures, nor are they considered funny in just one specific culture.

3. Linguistic Elements are based on linguistic features.

Example: In the *Veep* episode “Nicknames” Amy and Mike list various nicknames given to Selina by internet bloggers. Many of these have a linguistic element to them, for example Tawdry Hepburn, where the joke lies in the similar pronunciation of “tawdry” and “Audrey”.

4. Visual Elements consist of humor produced by what the viewers are able to see on the screen.

Example: In the *Veep* episode “Nicknames” the Vice President takes off her shoes and runs together with her staff from the Executive Office Building to the neighboring White House, where a meeting is taking place. There is no dialogue as we see the group running towards the meeting room past security guards and Secret Service agents.

5. Graphic Elements are written messages inserted in screen pictures.

Example: In “Halloween” we can see a “Police - safety first” sticker next to a trash can which Jake sets on fire.

6. Paralinguistic Elements include non-verbal qualities of a voice, for example, intonation and tone, laughter, screaming, and sighing.

Example: In “Yippie Kayak” Amy wants to take part in a polar swim together with Rosa and Captain Holt, despite the fact that she hates the cold. As the three of them run into the water, Amy can be heard screaming.

7. Non-Marked (Humorous) Elements consist of various instances that are not easily categorized into the other categories but are still humorous.

Example: In the *Veep* episode “The Vic Allen Dinner” Kent says that a certain photograph made the President look bad due to his jowls, to which Selina replies: “That’s how he looks. That’s his face.” Such humor is often based on the characters themselves, their actions, opinions and attitudes.

8. Sound Elements are “sounds that by themselves or in combination with others may be humorous” (Martínez-Sierra, 2005, p. 291–292).

Example: In “Yippie Kayak” Terry is having dinner with his family, and in the background we can hear his cellphone ringing, which he tries to ignore in order to prove that his family is more important to him than his job.

For the most part the jokes presented and analyzed in the next section have been classified into the categories of Linguistic Elements, Community-and-Institutions Elements, Community-Sense-of-Humor Elements as well as Non-Marked Elements. These four categories are the most significant in terms of translation and subtitling due to them being portrayed verbally. The vast majority of audiovisual humor portrayed in films and television series of today is verbal rather than visual or graphic, however, also the non-verbal elements have been discussed in such scenes where they are present.

The taxonomy has also been used by Jankowska (2009), Kianbakht (2016) and Zolczer (2016). Jankowska’s (2009) work examines the differences between the original English and the dubbed and subtitled Polish and Spanish versions of the animated comedy film *Shrek*, whereas Kianbakht (2016) concentrates on the American sitcom *Malcolm in the Middle* and its Persian versions, both subtitled and dubbed. Zolczer (2016) in turn examines the Hungarian subtitled and dubbed versions of the popular American sitcoms *Friends* and *The Big Bang Theory*.

In this study the data is presented in *cards*, which is a method designed by Martínez-Sierra (2005). The cards, one for each of the humorous instances analyzed, include 1) relevant information concerning the scene such as the time stamp of the episode in which it takes place, 2) a short

description of the scene to give context to the jokes, 3) transcriptions of the original English lines and their Finnish subtitles as well as 4) the humorous load of both the source and target versions. The cards are categorized under subsections depending on the translatability and type of the jokes: 4.1. considers humorous instances with no loss of humorous load, 4.2. discusses instances in which some loss is present and, finally, 4.3. deals with instances in which there is significant loss of humorous load, including such jokes that have for one reason or another been left untranslated completely. Each of the humorous elements are analyzed as thoroughly as I have seen fit, with some more complex ones requiring more explanation than other, more straightforward jokes. In order to build a balanced analysis that does not only concentrate on reductions and losses, but also showcases instances of translatable, universal humor, the analyzed humorous instances include both complex and simple jokes. It is important to note that though comedy is widely accepted as a challenging genre to translate, there is still much of perfectly translatable humor that is not restricted by any linguistic or cultural aspects.

4. ANALYSIS

The humorous instances will each be presented in the aforementioned card-form, an approach designed by Martínez-Sierra (2005) and later also used by Jankowska (2009), Kianbakht (2016), and Zolczer (2016). I have done some modifications to the cards in order to better fit them with my style of analysis, so the cards presented in this study are not identical to those of Martínez-Sierra, Jankowska, Kianbakht or Zolczer. This is mainly because all of the aforementioned writers included the dubbed versions of the examined series or films in their analyses, therefore requiring more space and columns for their cards. As mentioned in the previous section, the cards include a brief summary of the scene to give context to the jokes. Presented in the following analysis are 16 cards in total, consisting of four humorous instances of each of the four episodes. In *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*'s "Halloween" 22 instances of humor were identified, and in "Yippie Kayak" a similar amount of 24. For *Veep* the numbers are somewhat higher with 43 instances of humor identified in "Nicknames" and 38 in "The Vic Allen Dinner". A further two humorous instances are analyzed in section 4.4. where the aim is to compare the humor of the two series.

4.1. NO LOSS OF HUMOROUS LOAD

In this subsection I have collected all the humorous instances where no loss of humorous load is present. In other words, these jokes proved to be translatable from English into Finnish and had no significant linguistic or cultural restrictions. In nearly all of these cases the translated target version is simpler and shorter due to the spatio-temporal restrictions of subtitling, but none of the humorous elements have been omitted and thus the humorous load of the source and target versions remains the same. The cards are organized not by the series but by the type of humor they contain, for example, the ones containing Community-Sense-of-Humor Elements are arranged to follow one another, while the Linguistic Element-based jokes are grouped together.

Non-Marked Elements are typically ones that do not cause problems in the translation process, because such humor, at least in this case study, is often based on the characters themselves. However, as mentioned in the previous section, Non-Marked Elements include all such humor that

cannot easily be categorized as any other type of element. A good example of character-related Non-Marked humor can be examined in the following scene from the *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* episode “Halloween”, presented here in Figure 1.

| |
|--|
| Card: Halloween 07 |
| Series: Brooklyn Nine-Nine |
| Minute of episode: 04’ 20” |
| Context: Jake tries to get Gina to help him win the Halloween heist against Captain Holt |
| Source version: Jake: How’s the dance troupe? Did you get a haircut? What’s the Captain’s schedule like today? Gina: I’m not gonna help you rob him, Jake. I’m his assistant, and I take that job incredibly seriously. Jake: You’re literally making paper airplanes out of police reports right now. Gina: Well, how am I supposed to get it into that garbage can? |
| Humorous load: Non-Marked, Visual Elements |
| Target version: Jake: Kuinkas tanssiryhmä? Uusi kampaas? Millainen pomon aikataulu on? Gina: En auta sinua. Olen hänen assarinsa. Otan tehtäväni vakavasti. Jake: Teet raporteista paperilennokkeja. Gina: Kuinka muuten saisin ne roskikseen? |
| Humorous load: Non-Marked, Visual Elements |
| Figure 1. |

In this scene there is no loss of humorous load whatsoever and the lines, humorous elements included, have been translated without a problem. The only parts that have been omitted have been left out due to the temporal and spatial factors that always need to be taken into account in subtitling. For example, “I’m not gonna help you rob him, Jake” becomes a shorter and simpler ‘En auta sinua’ (literally: I won’t help you) because of the limited space and time that the subtitle lines have on the screen. The humor in this scene is not a specific joke or pun, but rather Gina’s actions and her character’s nature. Throughout the series Gina is seen as someone who will only do the bare minimum and sometimes not even that, and she often makes fun of the officers and detectives at the

precinct for caring about their work so deeply. Thus, Gina claiming to take her job seriously is categorized here as the Non-Marked Element, as well as Jake's response to her claim ("You're literally making paper airplanes out of police reports right now") and Gina's answer ("Well, how am I supposed to get it into that garbage can?"). Then we see her trying to throw the paper airplane into the garbage can, and once the camera pans directly on the can we see several other paper airplanes on the floor next to it, creating the Visual Element of humor. Jake's attempt at trying to small-talk and manipulate Gina into being on his side in the Halloween heist is also humorous, but falls under the Non-Marked category as well. Language does not prove to be a problematic aspect in this scene as everything can be directly translated from English into Finnish, nor is there anything so culture-specific taking place that Finnish viewers would not understand.

The following scenes draw their humor from a range of topics, which can be categorized as Community-Sense-of-Humor Elements, as well as Non-Marked and possible other elements with the exception of Community-and-Institutions Elements.

Card: Halloween 22

Series: Brooklyn Nine-Nine

Minute of episode: 19' 56"

Context: Charles walks into the squad room where the rest of the squad is waiting for him, all dressed up in Halloween costumes.

Source version:

Charles: What is all this?

Amy: You know how I think Halloween is for jerks? Well, this Halloween, I was the jerk. I'm sorry about tonight.

Jake: "I'm sorry about tonight." We found the title for Santiago's follow-up sex tape.

Charles: I'm sorry I couldn't convince you to love Halloween.

Amy: It's not your fault. I was terrible.

Jake: "It's not your fault I was terrible" is also one of your sex tapes.

Amy: Halloween is unbearable. But it was slightly less unbearable with you. Don't.

Jake: Okay.

Humorous load: Community-Sense-of-Humor, Non-Marked, Visual Elements

Card: Halloween 22**Target version:**

Charles: Mitä tämä on?

Amy: Sanoin, että halloween on ääliöille. Tänä vuonna minä olin ääliö. Pahoitteluni tästä illasta.

Jake: "Pahoitteluni tästä illasta" on Santiagon seksijatko-osan nimi.

Charles: Harmi, etten kääntänyt päätäsi.

Amy: Se ei ollut sinun vikasi. Olin kamala.

Jake: Sekin on yksi seksivideoistasi.

Amy: Halloween on sietämätön juhla, mutta teit siitä vähän enemmän siedettävän. Älä!

Jake: Okei.

Humorous load: Community-Sense-of-Humor, Non-Marked, Visual Elements

Figure 2.

The scene described in Figure 2 is the second time the reoccurring "Title of your sex tape" joke is used in the show. It first occurs in the beginning of the "Halloween" episode when Amy wishes for everyone to be "kind, sober and fully dressed," to which Jake answers: "*Kind, sober and fully-dressed.*" Good news everyone, we found the name of Santiago's sex tape." This running gag has occurred 24 times in the show as of April 2019 when the 14th episode of Season 6 aired in the United States. Typically these jokes translate quite well from the source language to the target language, and because the cultural differences between the United States and Finland are not that significant when it comes to humor, the humorous load remains the same in both the source and target versions. Jokes that are based on sexual references and double entendres are typically categorized as Community-Sense-of-Humor Elements, and as described in section 3.3. the topics of these elements "appear to be more popular in certain communities than in others" (Martinez-Sierra, 2005, p. 290). They are considered funny and humorous by some communities—western countries in this case—but might be considered indecent and even taboo in other communities. In the case of this particular scene the Community-Sense-of-Humor Element is naturally the aforementioned "Title of your sex tape" joke, which occurs twice in the scene, but the Non-Marked Elements add to the humorous load as well. Jake continuously making fun of Amy is also a reoccurring theme in the show and oftentimes Amy does not act surprised by his jokes, because she knows to expect them. Here Amy anticipates what Jake is going to say after his second joke, and before Jake can make a

third joke, she tells him not to. The viewers can see Jake open his mouth to make a comment, from which comes the Visual Element of humor, but Amy cannot see him as she is standing in front of him facing forward, yet she can guess what he is going to say anyway and tells him, with an annoyed expression, "Don't." The viewers see Jake first close his mouth and then agree to not make another joke.

Another clear example of Community-Sense-of-Humor can be identified in the *Veep* episode "Nicknames". The scene is presented here in Figure 3.

| |
|--|
| Card: Nicknames 29 |
| Series: Veep |
| Minute of episode: 17' 25" |
| Context: The team's plans have been foiled and Selina is furious, demanding an explanation |
| Source version: |
| Dan: I was trying to use Jonah for intelligence. |
| Selina: That's like trying to use a croissant as a fucking dildo. |
| Dan: I thought... |
| Selina: No, no, no. Let me be more clear. It doesn't do the job and it makes a fucking mess! Get out of my office. |
| Humorous load: Community-Sense-of-Humor, Non-Marked Elements |
| Target version: |
| Dan: Yritin saada Jonahilta tietoa. |
| Selina: Sama kuin yrittäisi käyttää croissanttia dildona. |
| Dan: Ajattelin... |
| Selina: Ei, ei. Selvennän asiaa. Homma ei onnistu sillä, ja jälkeen jää helvetinmoinen sotku! Ulos toimistostani. |
| Humorous load: Community-Sense-of-Humor, Non-Marked Elements |
| Figure 3. |

This verbal exchange does not offer any particular challenge when it comes to translation and subtitling. It does not rely on the linguistic aspects of language or any specific cultural phenomena,

and therefore it has been translated without a problem. It is simply an outrageous insult made by Selina, directed at both Dan and Jonah, the latter of whom is not present during the scene. Due to the sexual nature of the insult it is categorized as a Community-Sense-of-Humor Element. The Non-Marked Element in this case is the unexpected way with words that Selina showcases, as the character often does, especially when criticizing or insulting others. During the scene Selina is very angry, and such moments are often played for laughs in the show. The anger is shown in her expression, tone of voice and actions as she screams at Dan and even throws a pile of papers on the floor while the members of her team stand around her in silence. The crude language used by Selina not only in this scene, but in many others throughout the show, is not the type of language one would expect of the Vice president of the United States, and it is a common source of humor in the show. The jokes and insults uttered by the characters are designed to surprise the viewers, and though the particular insult shown in Figure 3 is certainly creative, it is quite typical of the character of Selina.

The Community-Sense-of-Humor Element identified in the end scene of the “Nicknames” episode , as transcribed here in Figure 4, is similarly an uncomplicated humorous moment that does not pose any particular challenge for the translator.

| |
|--|
| Card: Nicknames 43 |
| Series: Veep |
| Minute of episode: 24’ 52” |
| Context: The president has appointed Selina as the head of the obesity program and Selina, displeased about it, rants to Amy |
| Source version: Selina: Oh, my God. It's weakness. That's really all it is. Pure and simple, it's weakness. It's about self-control. You don't masturbate in the subway, do you, Amy? No, you don't. Do you shit in the street, Amy? No, of course you don't. Because you've gotten ahold of yourself. And now I've got say what? I've got to say, "I'm the Vice President of the United States. Put the cupcake down." That's now my job? |
| Amy: I... it's... |
| Selina: Oh, for fuck's sakes. |

| |
|---|
| Card: Nicknames 43 |
| Amy: Have you ever had a weight problem? |
| Selina: Yeah, I have. |
| Humorous load: Community-Sense-of-Humor, Non-Marked Elements |
| Target version: |
| Selina: Voi luoja, se on pelkkää heikkoutta. Ei mitään muuta. Siinä on kyse itsehillinnästä. Ethän masturboi metrossa, Amy? Et niin. Paskotko kaduille? Et tietenkään. Koska osaat hillitä itsesi. Mitä minun pitäisi sanoa ihmisille? “Olen Yhdysvaltain varapresidentti. Näpit irti leivoksista.” Onko se uusi työni? |
| Amy: Minä... |
| Selina: Helvetti soikoon. |
| Amy: Onko teillä ollut paino-ongelmia? |
| Selina: On. |
| Humorous load: Community-Sense-of-Humor, Non-Marked Elements |
| Figure 4. |

This is yet another example of a humorous instance with no loss of humorous load. The humorous elements in the scene are classified as both Community-Sense-of-Humor and Non-Marked elements. The translation itself is very straightforward, and there are no cultural or linguistic issues present which would separate the target version from the original. Selina produces a monologue about obesity as she has just been appointed the head of an obesity program by the president, and her views regarding the topic are rather strong and negative. Rhetorically asking Amy whether or not she masturbates in the subway or defecates in the street is mainly what causes the classification to be Community-Sense-of-Humor, because in some communities topics such as these would not be perceived as funny while in others they are common sources of humor. The Non-Marked Element is Selina admitting that she has, in fact, had a problem with her weight at some point in time.

As wide as the range of the topics of Community-Sense-of-Humor is, identifying these elements is not that difficult. As mentioned in section 3.3, certain concepts and topics are not used as a source of humor in some communities, while in others people frequently draw humor from the same topics. One good example of such a community-dividing topic is suicide, which is used for humor

in the following scene from the *Veep* episode “The Vic Allen Dinner,” presented here in Figure 5.

| |
|---|
| Card: The Vic Allen Dinner 38 |
| Series: Veep |
| Minute of episode: 26’ 00” |
| Context: Aboard the Air Force Two Gary and Dan watch Jonah walk down the runway after he has been kicked off the plane |
| Source version: Gary: He should really be on suicide watch. Dan: Yeah, make sure he goes through with it. |
| Humorous load: Community-Sense-of-Humor, Non-Marked, Visual Elements |
| Target version: Gary: Häntä pitäisi vahtia itsemurhan varalta. Dan: Niin, varmistaa että hän tekee sen. |
| Humorous load: Community-Sense-of-Humor, Non-Marked, Visual Elements |
| Figure 5. |

This is another instance of easily translatable humor which relies heavily on the visual aspect as well as the character dynamics of the show. The team’s hatred of Jonah has been notably present during the whole episode and it culminates to this scene, in which he has been thrown out of the Air Force Two for sharing a video of Selina on social media, and is seen walking down the windy airport runway, his head hung low. Gary then proceeds to make fun of Jonah by saying that he should be put on suicide watch, to which Dan answers that: ”Yeah, to make sure he goes through with it.” Due to the topic of the joke it is categorized here as a Community-Sense-of-Humor Element, as humor based on suicide could be considered taboo and insensitive in some cultures, groups, and communities. There is the Non-Marked Element to the joke as well, because the joke reverses the concept of suicide watch to mean the exact opposite: not to prevent a person from committing suicide, but to oversee that they carry it out. In some ways it could also be categorized as a Linguistic Element, despite the fact that it is not an obvious pun or a play on words, but it does switch the meaning of words typically used to mean something else.

Instances of humor that can be categorized as Community-and-Institutions Elements often work rather universally, especially when it comes to American television series, because Finnish viewers will more often than not understand these references. As Martínez-Sierra (2009) suggests, these references may include celebrities, politicians, organizations, newspapers, books, and films. In *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* these types of humorous instances are often based on celebrities and pop culture, but in *Veep* the concepts are often different and include for example politicians, organizations and events.

Examples of Community-and-Institutions Elements can be identified in the *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* episode “Yippie Kayak,” which contains multiple references to the 1988 action film *Die Hard*. The plot of the episode is similar to the movie as the detectives find themselves entangled in a hostage situation at a mall during Christmas. In the following scenes, presented in Figures 6 and 7, I have identified two different Community-and-Institutions Elements. These humorous instances are analyzed as follows.

Card: Yippie Kayak 17

Series: Brooklyn Nine-Nine

Minute of episode: 10’ 30”

Context: Jake sneaks around the shopping mall where robbers are keeping people hostage in an attempt to gather intel on the robbers

Source version:

Jake: All right, let's see what we're dealing with. I'll call you Klaus. You will be Günter. With the little dots over the U. Jürgen.

Robber [over walkie-talkie]: Hey, Matt. Are you in position?

Matt: I'm here.

Jake: Oh, great, the bad guy's name is Matt.

Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Non-Marked, Visual Elements

Target version:

Jake: Katsotaan, mitä meillä on vastassa. Kutsun sinua nimellä Klaus. Sinä saat luvan olla Günter, jonka nimen U-kirjaimen päällä on pienet pisteet. Jürgen.

Robber [over walkie-talkie]: Hei, Matt, oletko paikallasi?

Card: Yippie Kayak 17

Matt: Täällä ollaan.

Jake: Kiva, tuon pahiksen nimi on Matt.

Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Non-Marked, Visual Elements

Figure 6.

The prevailing theme within the episode is *Die Hard*, which has been mentioned in other episodes as well and is known to the viewers as the favorite film of the character Jake. Many of the scenes in the episode draw their humor from the film, and the scene, shown in Figure 6 is no exception. Jake, Charles and Gina have found themselves in the middle of a hostage situation inside a shopping mall, but are yet to be noticed by the perpetrators. Jake instantly draws the connection between their situation and the film, and treats nearly every following moment as a scene of the movie. He decides that the perpetrators are German, because in *Die Hard* they are, and copying the actions of the film's hero John McClane he sneaks around the mall, counting the perpetrators and listing them by writing their made-up German names on his wrist. The humor based on the film *Die Hard* in the scene is categorized as Community-and-Institutions Element, as it directly references a popular film franchise, and even the Visual Elements within the scene work in the frame that the film provides. For example, there is a shot of Jake writing the names on his wrist, and viewers familiar with *Die Hard* will recognize the scene from the original movie. This is clearly a Visual Element, but it only works within the Community-and-Institutions Element because most of the humor is lost if the viewer is not familiar with *Die Hard*.

Translation poses no challenges in this scene, because any viewer, regardless of nationality, will be able to make the connection if they have seen the 1988 film. The Non-Marked Elements, which are also present, are not quite as tied to the film references. Jake's knowledge or rather the lack of German names and their spelling can be categorized as its own humorous instance, as can his disappointment when it is revealed that one of the robbers is simply named Matt and does not have any of the stereotypical villain names that Jake had imagined. It is obvious that the viewer has to be aware of the references to the 80s action film in order to fully understand the humor, but on the other hand, one can still find the scene funny without understanding the references. This particular humorous instance is interesting in the sense that it does not matter what language the viewer

speaks or where they are from, because the link between the original and the translation is the film to which the scene is a reference.

The Community-and-Institutions Element that appears again in the following scene, presented here in Figure 7, is more linguistic than visual in nature, as it has to do with a famous one-liner from the film *Die Hard*.

| |
|--|
| Card: Yippie Kayak 23 |
| Series: Brooklyn Nine-Nine |
| Minute of episode: 18' 23" |
| Context: Charles surprises the robber by jumping onto him from an air conditioning vent |
| Source version: |
| Charles: Yippie kayak, other buckets! |
| Jake: Boyle! You did it! And you completely botched the catchphrase. |
| Charles: I'm pretty sure it was right. |
| Jake: No, but you did great. |
| Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Linguistic, Non-Marked Elements |
| Target version: |
| Charles: Jippikajakki, jaskasää! |
| Jake: Sinä teit sen. Ja munasit huudahduksen täysin. |
| Charles: Olen varma, että se meni oikein. |
| Jake: Ei mennyt, mutta hyvää työtä. |
| Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Linguistic, Non-Marked Elements |
| Figure 7. |

The humor here lies not only in the connections to the movie, but in the characters' traits as well. Charles jumps onto the robber from an air-conditioning vent, subduing him, and exclaims "Yippie kayak, other buckets!" This is the reference to the well-known catchphrase "Yippee-ki-yay, motherfucker," spoken by the *Die Hard* hero John McClane in one of the key scenes of the movie. While Charles' line does sound similar to the original, the expletive has been left out and changed into a more family friendly, yet somewhat nonsensical form. This is a character trait of Charles, and

his wordplay here is classified as a Linguistic Element. The Finnish target version is made to work in a similar fashion, and thus the translation suffers no loss of humorous load. “Yippie kayak, other buckets” has been translated into ‘Jippikajakki, jaskasää’ which is also categorized as a Linguistic Element. The term ‘jaskasää’ here can be considered a euphemism to ‘paskapää’ (literally: shit head). The word “kayak” of the original line can also be identified in the target version, as the word ‘kajakki’ is its Finnish equivalent. In the Finnish subtitled version of the film, the original *Die Hard* line has been translated into ‘Jippii-jai-jei, kusipää’ (literally: piss head), so the connection to the original is present as well.

A Community-and-Institutions Element based on a different kind of reference can be found in the *Veep* episode “The Vic Allen Dinner”. The reference, made by Kent’s character, is about a real-world Soviet politician, as can be seen in the following transcription of the scene:

| |
|---|
| Card: The Vic Allen Dinner 12 |
| Series: Veep |
| Minute of episode: 04’ 28” |
| Context: Selina confronts Kent about the photograph that was released without her approval |
| Source Version |
| Kent: This is the photograph? |
| Selina: No, just wondering if you think this sweater goes with the dress. |
| Kent: Look, the other photos caught POTUS at a bad angle. Vis-a-vis jowls. |
| Selina: What? |
| Kent: It's a bad look. |
| Selina: That's how he looks. That's his face. Why didn't you just take the good one of me, Photoshop it in? |
| Kent: I can't airbrush history, ma'am. I'm not Joseph Stalin. |
| Selina: No, that's true. You're not. You don't have a tenth of his charm. |
| Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Non-Marked Elements |
| Target Version |
| Kent: Koskeeko tämä sitä kuvaa? |

Card: The Vic Allen Dinner 12

Selina: Ei, kysyisin pukeutumisneuvoja.

Kent: Muissa kuvissa presidentin posket korostuivat liikaa. Se ei näytä hyvältä.

Selina: Mutta tuoltahan hän näyttää! Mikset fotoshopannut hyvää kuvaani mukaan?

Kent: En ole mikään Josef Stalin.

Selina: Se on totta, sinulla ei ole kymmenesosaakaan hänen charmistaan.

Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Non-Marked Elements

Figure 8.

Selina is confronting Kent about the photograph released of a hostage negotiation situation, in which Selina can be seen in the background using her phone. Kent assumes correctly as he asks her if she is there to talk about the photograph, to which Selina impertinently answers that no, she just wants to know if her sweater goes with the dress. This kind of character-based sarcastic behavior that is humorous in nature is categorized as a typical Non-Marked Element. In the scene another Non-Marked Element can be identified in the way the characters talk about the President and his looks. Kent insists that other photographs taken during the situation are unflattering to the President, Selina says that it is just how he looks. Both of these elements are present in the Finnish subtitles as well. The Community-and-Institutions Element comes from Kent stating that he would not "airbrush history" by photoshopping the image in question because he is not Joseph Stalin, and Selina subsequently answering him that no, he indeed is not, because Kent does not have Stalin's charm. The Stalin reference has been included in the subtitles as well, but the line about airbrushing history has been left out. However, the viewer is still able to make the connection because Finnish viewers are generally familiar with the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin and his questionable politics. In this scene the humorous load remains the same in both the source and target versions. Selina's remark, which essentially is an insult towards Kent as she claims that one of the worst dictators in the history of the world is in some way better than him, can also be categorized as a Non-Marked Element when examined from the point of view of character dynamics. The entire scene easily translates between the source and target languages because Selina's sarcasm and the issue concerning the president's looks are not linguistically or culturally restricted, and because Stalin is well-known worldwide.

In these examples of Community-and-Institutions Elements the references to celebrities, politicians, and films have not posed any particular challenges to translation. It is also safe to draw the conclusion that Non-Marked Elements, especially the types of jokes that relate directly to the characters and the dynamics of the show, are fairly simply translated, at least when the spatio-temporal factors of subtitling do not constrict the translation. Many of the Community-Sense-of-Humor Elements also translate well from English into Finnish in the case of these particular television series and these two source and target cultures. However, this is not always the case, and the following section contains examples of such humorous instances that have suffered loss of humorous load in the target versions for various reasons.

4.2. LOSS OF HUMOROUS LOAD

In this section all scenes that suffer *some* loss of humorous load have been analyzed and can be found listed below. It is important to note that this section includes scenes in which some or most of the humorous load still remains in the target version, and the scenes that suffer significant or complete loss of humorous load are to be analyzed in the next subsection, 4.3. Many of the scenes discussed in this section contain multiple different elements of humor, which is why they cannot be grouped together quite as easily as the ones in the previous subsection. The humorous instances that rely mostly on the linguistic aspects are presented first, with the other types following after, though almost all of these examples contain more than two types of elements.

Linguistic Elements include all jokes that are based on linguistic features, such as puns or wordplays. These types of humorous instances are the most troublesome in terms of translation and are often omitted from the target versions. Plays on words, for example, often simply cannot be translated from the source language to the target language in such a way that they retain the wordplay aspect as well as the humor without drastically changing the original meaning. The following scene from the *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* episode “Halloween,” as presented here in Figure 9, shows an example of an untranslated humorous instance, where the loss of humorous load occurs mainly due to linguistic differences.

| |
|--|
| Card: Halloween 04 |
| Series: Brooklyn Nine-Nine |
| Minute of episode: 02' 03" |
| Context: Jake tells everyone in the squad room about his first Halloween arrest |
| Source version: <p>Jake: Well, ring it up, nerds. I just arrested my first Halloween idiot of the season. He was trying to rob a bank but had a little trouble with the getaway.</p> <p>[Cut to a bank robber in a banana costume being stuck inside a revolving door]</p> <p>Jake: Trying to "split," huh? Don't worry, I'm sure you'll get out on "a peel." I'm so glad you're stuck. I've got a million of these.</p> |
| Humorous load: Linguistic, Non-Marked, Visual Elements |
| Target version: <p>Jake: Merkitkää muistiin, nörtit! Pidätin juuri vuoden ekan halloween-idioottini. Hän yritti ryöstää pankin, mutta pako epäonnistui.</p> <p>[Cut to a bank robber in a banana costume being stuck inside a revolving door]</p> <p>Jake: Yritätkö livahtaa? Varo, ettet liukastu matkalla kuoreen. Näitä riittää kyllä.</p> |
| Humorous load: Non-Marked, Visual Elements |
| Figure 9. |

Both of the puns made by Jake in the original have been replaced by one joke in the translation, which is not based on any linguistic feature. As discussed previously in section 3.1, puns and wordplays are notoriously difficult to translate due to them relying purely on the linguistic aspects of language, such as homonyms, homophones, and homographs. In the case of this particular scene most of Jake's puns are based exactly on those aspects. First he asks the robber, who has gotten stuck inside a revolving door in his banana costume, if he is trying to split. Not only does split here mean "to leave", but it is also a reference to a well-known American dessert called banana split. This pun is thus based on the verb "split" and the word for the dessert being homonyms. The second pun Jake makes is similar. He tells the robber that he is sure he will get out on appeal, meaning that in the American justice system the higher court can review a decision made by the lower court and decide to overturn it, thus setting the alleged perpetrator free. The wordplay in this line lies in the word "appeal" being homophones with "a peel," meaning of course the skin of a fruit such as a

banana. Neither of these puns can be translated into Finnish because such homonyms or homophones do not exist in the Finnish language. The translator has simply decided to include one banana-related joke: ‘Varo, ettet liukastu matkalla kuoreen.’ This roughly translates to ”Be careful not to slip on a peel on the way.” The banana-element has been included in the translated joke, as well as the notion of slipping on a banana peel, which is possibly one of the oldest and most well-known elements of slapstick comedy. The linguistic element, however, is omitted from the target version altogether, causing the loss of the humorous load in the scene. The Visual Element is naturally present in both the source and target versions since the viewers see the same picture, as well as the Non-Marked Element, which is Jake’s enjoyment of the situation. This, however, is not as clear in the translation, because Jake’s line ”I’m so glad you’re stuck” has not been translated most likely due to the spatio-temporal factors. In other words, as the line does not add anything significant to the actual plot, it would be unnecessary to make room for it in the subtitles. The viewers can still see Jake visibly happy about the situation as he tells the robber that he has more puns in store for him.

The following scene is similar in the sense that the Linguistic Element is lost in the target version completely due to the fact that no corresponding words exist in Finnish, at least not ones that would work similarly as those of the original.

| |
|---|
| Card: Yippie Kayak 07 |
| Series: Brooklyn Nine-Nine |
| Minute of episode: 03’ 43” |
| Context: Charles and Gina discuss their Christmas plans in the squad room |
| Source version: Charles: Gina! It's our first annual Boyle-Linetti Christmas. Are you excited about going to town on Daddy's nog? Gina: Christmas is cancelled. Charles ruined it. |
| Humorous load: Community-Sense-of-Humor, Linguistic, Non-Marked Elements |
| Target version: Charles: On ensimmäinen vuotuinen Boyle-Linetti-joulumme. Odotatko pääseväsi kaupungille isukin totille? |

Card: Yippie Kayak 07

Gina: Joulun on peruttu! Charles pilasi sen.

Humorous load: Non-Marked Elements

Figure 10.

The humorous instance portrayed here in Figure 10 includes three different humorous elements despite being a short verbal exchange between two characters, who have one line each. In the source version, Charles' seemingly innocent question of whether or not Gina is excited to taste the eggnog his father has prepared, is turned into a joke when Charles manages to word his question in a way that makes it sound undoubtedly sexual. This is a running gag on the show, as Charles often says things that are meant to be innocent, but are laden with sexual innuendos. In this instance, his use of the word "nog" instead of "eggnog" along with "Daddy" instead of "dad" or "father" make for a rather suggestive image, which leads to Gina announcing that Charles has ruined Christmas. This Linguistic Element is, however, missing from the target version, as the translated line does not work in the same way. According to the Urban Dictionary, "nog" is a slang term for semen, but in Finnish the word 'toti' only means a specific type of alcoholic drink. Even though "Daddy" has been translated into the Finnish equivalent 'isukki', the translation simply is not comparable to the original line. In addition to this, where in the source version the term "going to town" is meant as having a taste of the nog, in the target version it has been translated literally as going into town to drink eggnog. While the original line is comical in its double meaning and Charles' use of badly chosen words, the translated line ends up being rather nonsensical and odd. It is also ambiguous enough to not be classified as a clear Community-Sense-of-Humor Element unlike the original line which is obviously sexual, but since some humor remains, it is classified here as a Non-Marked Element. Another such element within the scene is Gina's reaction, the way she does not even answer Charles' question and simply announces that Christmas has been cancelled because Charles has ruined it. This is present in both the source and target versions, although in the source version her reaction makes more sense. Only the Non-Marked Element of the original remains in the target version, and two elements, the Linguistic and the Community-Sense-of-Humor Element are lost.

The humorous instance presented here in Figure 11 is particularly tricky for the subtitler, because much of the humor lies in the Linguistic and Paralinguistic Elements. As stated by Martínez-Sierra

(2009), Paralinguistic Elements include the non-verbal qualities of a voice, such as intonation and tone, laughter, screaming, and sighing. Good examples of humor based on paralinguistic aspects are accents and dialects, which can be identified in the following scene.

| |
|--|
| Card: Yippie Kayak 20 |
| Series: Brooklyn Nine-Nine |
| Minute of episode: 14' 30" |
| Context: Jake and Charles have managed to catch some of the robbers and are interrogating them |
| Source version: |
| Jake: All right, where are you holding the hostages? |
| Robber: Oh, bet you'd like to know, eh? |
| Jake: Canadian? No! You're so clearly supposed to be German. Are any of you German? |
| Robbers [shaking head]: Mm-mm. |
| Charles: Russian? |
| Robbers: Mm-mm. |
| Charles: North Korean? |
| Robbers: Mm-mm. |
| Charles: Greek? I don't trust the way the Greeks dance. |
| Jake: No one does. |
| Robber [over walkie-talkie]: You there? |
| Jake: Oh. Uh, yeah, I was oot, but now I'm back, eh? |
| Robber [over walkie-talkie]: Meet me in the service corridor. We've got a situation with the hostages. |
| Jake: Okey dokey, sorry to hear about that. |
| Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Linguistic, Paralinguistic, Non-Marked Elements |
| Target version: |
| Jake: Missä panttivangit ovat? |
| Robber: Sekös sinua kiinnostaa, eh? |
| Jake: Kanadalainen? Ei. Teidän piti olla saksalaisia. Onko yksikään saksalainen? |

Card: Yippie Kayak 20

Robbers [shaking head]: Mm-mm.

Charles: Venäläinen?

Robbers: Mm-mm.

Charles: Pohjoiskorealainen?

Robbers: Mm-mm.

Charles: Kreikkalainen? En luota kreikkalaisten tanssitapaan.

Jake: Ei kukaan luota.

Robber [over walkie-talkie]: Oletko siellä?

Jake: Olin ulkona, mutta tässä ollaan, eh.

Robber: Tavataan huoltokäytävässä. Panttivankien kanssa on ongelmia.

Jake: Selkis. Harmi kuulla.

Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Linguistic, Non-Marked Elements

Figure 11.

The Paralinguistic Element here is the Canadian English spoken by the robbers and Jake, though the latter imitates it rather poorly. Jake, as well as the average American viewer, will instantly recognize the Canadian accent of the robber who answers Jake's question and ends his sentence with the stereotypical Canadian tag "eh". However, for the average Finnish viewer, this is not as clear because it cannot be assumed that a Finnish viewer would, first of all, recognize the accent and second, know that it is how (the stereotypical) Canadian speaks. Canadians are also stereotypically considered to be polite and thus do not fit into the action movie villain trope. Jake is disappointed by this revelation and proceeds to ask the robbers if any of them are German, Russian or even North Korean, the latter of which is particularly humorous because all of the robbers are clearly caucasian. Jake's disappointment as well as Charles' opinion on the Greeks create the Non-Marked Element, but Jake's desperate need for the culprits to be similar to those in *Die Hard* is categorized as a Community-and-Institutions Element, as is Charles' asking if they might at least be Russian, North Korean or Greek since they are not German. The Linguistic aspect, together with the Paralinguistic Element, is present in Jake's faking of a Canadian accent as he tries to pass as one of the robbers over the walkie-talkie. His choices of words and exaggerated pronunciation add greatly to the humorous load of the scene, but this aspect is lost in the translation because certain accents are

difficult, if not impossible, to translate. The subtitler has chosen to use the sentence-ending tag ”eh” in the subtitles, as well as to translate the comical ”okey dokey” into ‘selkis’, which is also a very colloquial term, in order to preserve the accent-aspect. This helps to distinguish the robbers’ way of speaking from the detectives, but some of the humorous elements are still lost in translation.

Similarly to the scene presented earlier in Figure 9, the humor in the following scene from the *Veep* episode “Nicknames” is based on a linguistic feature in the form of a wordplay.

| |
|---|
| Card: Nicknames 19 |
| Series: Veep |
| Minute of episode: 09’ 43” |
| Context: A Secret Service agent smiles at Selina’s words as they walk past him |
| Source version: |
| Selina: Noncompliance penalties, don't you think those should be greater? I think we should just go for it. I think we should just fine the fuckers till the fuckers aren't fine. |
| [A Secret Service agent behind them smiles] |
| Selina: That was totally inappropriate. |
| Amy: Inappropriate. |
| Selina: Inappropriate. That's not the first time that that's happened, by the way. He's not supposed to register emotion. He's supposed to be like a robot geisha. |
| Amy: I'll see to it. |
| Selina: Yeah. |
| Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Linguistic, Non-Marked Elements |
| Target version: |
| Selina: Eikö sakkojen kannattaisi olla suurempia? Tehdään vaan näin. Piikitetään heitä sakoilla lihaan, kunnes ovat sakkolihaa. |
| [A Secret Service agent behind them smiles] |
| Selina: Tuo oli ihan sopimatonta. |
| Amy: Sopimatonta. |

| |
|---|
| Card: Nicknames 19 |
| Selina: Sopimatonta. Tuo ei ollut edes ensimmäinen kerta. Hänen ei pitäisi näyttää tunteitaan. Hänen pitäisi olla kuin robottigeisha. |
| Amy: Hoidan asian. |
| Selina: Selvä. |
| Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Linguistic, Non-Marked Elements |
| Figure 12. |

Selina's unique way of words is again shown as she delivers a play on words, presented above in Figure 12. "Fine the fuckers till the fuckers aren't fine" relies on the word "fine," meaning both to issue fines and to be fine as in to be all right, being homonyms. This line is rather straightforward and makes perfect sense in the source version, but because there are no equivalents in the target language, the target version ends up being quite different. 'Piikitetään heitä sakoilla lihaan, kunnes ovat sakkolihaa' makes little sense translated back into English, but the joke lies in the word 'sakkoliha', which according to the Urban Dictionary means children under 16 years of age that are legally too young for adults to engage in sexual acts with (literally: fine/penalty meat). In the target version, Selina says that they ought to "inject them with fines ['sakko'] into their meat ['lihaan'] until they become fine meat ['sakkolihaa']". Though it carries some meaning and is understandable enough in Finnish, the line still remains rather nonsensical, while the original line is a clear and simple play on words. In both cases the Linguistic Element remains, but it can be argued that the Finnish version is rather far-fetched and not as clever as the original. The Non-Marked Element in the scene is Selina and Amy's reactions to the Secret Service agent smiling. They deem his actions inappropriate, yet they fail to see how their own actions (their verbal exchange littered with crude terms) is inappropriate as well. Selina says that the agent should act like a robot geisha and show no emotion, and this reference to robots and specifically geishas is classified as a Community-and-Institutions Element. Both the Community-and-Institutions Element as well as the Non-Marked Element are present in the target version, because "robot geisha" is just as understandable when translated into Finnish and the actions and the attitudes of the characters, which create the Non-Marked Element, are not problematic translation-wise.

Similarly to the previous scene, the Linguistic Element is the most troublesome in the following scene. *Veep* contains a lot of humor based on linguistic features, and sometimes such jokes cannot be translated at all. This particular scene portrays the challenges of translating humor better than any other analyzed in this thesis. There are examples of both translatability and untranslatability, spatio-temporal challenges as well as linguistic challenges. The amount of humorous elements within the scene is higher than in any other scene analyzed in this case study, and this has resulted in quite a bit of variation between the source and target versions as well.

Card: The Vic Allen Dinner 16

Series: Veep

Minute of episode: 05' 44"

Context: Jonah comes into the office to tell Selina that she has become an internet meme

Source version:

Selina: God damn, why are you even here?

Jonah: Oh, I came here to tell you that you're a meme, ma'am.

Selina: I'm a meme ma'am? What are you talking about? Speak English, boy.

Jonah: A meme, an Internet phenomenon.

Amy: Okay, yes. There are Photoshopped versions of this springing up all over Twitter. You at the Declaration of Independence...

Selina: Oh, my God.

Amy: With Mary Magdalene at the crucifixion, the 2004 tsunami.

Gary: If there was a tsunami, you'd be genuinely looking at your phone 'cause you'd be checking the weather.

Selina: You know what? I don't need you to talk. How do we stop this meme ma'am shit?

Jonah: No, it's just a meme, ma'am. Not a meme ma'am. And usually they flame out after about 48 hours, but sometimes they blow up and become a super meme like Downfall or Gangnam.

Gary: I love Gangnam.

Selina: What did I just say?

Jonah: If it gets on Reddit or Tumblr, that can happen.

Card: The Vic Allen Dinner 16

Selina: Yeah, okay. You've got to get out of here, okay? Take all these meaningless syllables with you and just get out.

Jonah: Yes, absolutely, ma'am. Oh, and I will see you at the dinner tonight.

Selina: Oh, my God, yeah. Okay, yeah, that's a cherry on top of this whole turd cake.

Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Community-Sense-of-Humor, Linguistic, Non-Marked, Visual Elements

Target version:

Selina: Mitä edes teet täällä?

Jonah: Teistä on tullut meemi, rouva. Se on internet-ilmiö.

Amy: Aivan... Twitterissä leviää fotoshopattuja versioita kuvasta. Te itsenäisyysjulistuksessa, ristiinnaulitsemisessa, tsunamissa...

Gary: Tsunamissa katsoisitte säätietoja.

Selina: Ole sinä hiljaa. Miten tämä saadaan loppumaan?

Jonah: Ne tukahtuvat yleensä 48 tunnissa. Joistakin tulee supermeemejä, kuten Hitler kuulee tai Gangnam. Niin voi käydä, jos kuva päättyy Redditiin tai Tumblriin.

Selina: Lähde täältä. Ota merkityksettömät tavusi ja häivy.

Jonah: Totta kai. Näemme sitten illallisella

Selina: Voi luoja. Aivan. Se onkin kirsikka paskakakun päälle.

Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Community-Sense-of-Humor, Non-Marked, Visual Elements

Figure 13.

The most obvious example of loss of humorous load is the Linguistic Element, which has been left out of the target version completely, but which is a key element in the original version. Jonah telling Selina that she has become "a meme, ma'am" starts the rather chaotic exchange of words between the team members, specifically Jonah and Selina, as Jonah struggles to explain to Selina what has transpired. Confused, Selina asks Jonah "I'm a meme ma'am?" not realizing that Jonah has meant "meme, Madam". Selina is confused even further when she asks how to stop "the meme ma'am shit", and Jonah tries to correct her in that it is "just a meme, ma'am, not a meme ma'am." None of this element remains in the target version. It is, however, easy to understand why the translator has

omitted this exchange from the target version. Firstly, there are too many lines in the scene to translate into subtitles, as everything would not fit and there would not be enough time to read the subtitles, and secondly, there is no logical corresponding translation to "meme, ma'am" in Finnish. The direct translation of "meme, ma'am" would simply be 'meemi, rouva,' and because they are clearly different words with their own meanings, the confusion would not take place. Rather significant loss of humorous load occurs in this scene because of the linguistic factors, but it seems impossible to make this particular joke work in Finnish.

Unlike the Linguistic Element, the Community-and-Institutions Element as well as the Visual Element remain in both versions. The references to the widely known memes Downfall and Gangnam are mentioned in the target version as well ('Hitler kuulee' and 'Gangnam'), and the Visual Element, which is the photoshopped memes of Selina, can be viewed and thus understood by both audiences. The Community-Sense-of-Humor Element is Selina's ignorance when it comes to internet phenomena, and is shown in the source version in Selina's confusion about the term meme and in both versions in her not recognizing Reddit or Tumblr to be social media platforms. The references to Reddit and Tumblr can be classified as Community-and-Institutions Elements, much like Downfall and Gangnam, but it should be noted that the joke lies not in the references themselves but in the fact that Selina does not understand them, which is why I am hesitant to classify the references as their own jokes. Internet-related jokes typically classify as Community-Sense-of-Humor since they rely on certain communities' understanding of the topic. The Non-Marked Elements in the scene are once again related to dynamics between the character, specifically to the relationship of Selina and Gary. Selina telling Gary to not talk when he tries to defend her by saying it would make sense for her to be looking at her phone during a tsunami, and then Selina reminding him again not to speak when he says he loves the Gangnam meme. The second exchange is not translated in the target version, but the first instance is.

The last line of the scene, which is Selina saying that the oncoming dinner is "a cherry on top of this whole turd cake" is interesting in the sense that it is both a Linguistic Element, as it is a twist on a common phrase, as well as a Community-Sense-of-Humor element, because there is an added exploitative in a phrase typically used in certain communities. The translation in the target version

is similar, but perhaps the phrase is not as common in the Finnish-speaking communities. This line, however, suffers no loss of humorous load in the target version.

In these examples where some loss of humorous load is present, it is usually due to linguistic differences. Figure 10 shows an instance where the Linguistic Element is not found in the target version, and in the scene presented in Figure 11 the Paralinguistic Element is lost, but due to the scenes including several types of elements, the humorous load is not significantly diminished in such a case where one element is untranslated or translated in such a way that excludes the joke. If three out of the original four humorous elements can be found in the target version, humor is still strongly present, just not in its original form. In the next section such instances are presented in which the loss is much more significant than in the examples of this section.

4.3. SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF HUMOROUS LOAD

In the previous subsections I introduced such humorous instances that have been either translated completely or translated with minimal loss of humorous load. This subsection focuses on three scenes that suffer significant loss of humorous load in the target version due to various reasons. As pointed out in the previous sections, Linguistic Elements often prove to be problematic when it comes to translation. This is exactly the case in the first example, which is a short exchange of words taking place towards the end of the “Halloween” episode of *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, presented here in Figure 14.

Card: Halloween 20

Series: Brooklyn Nine-Nine

Minute of episode: 17’ 06”

Context: After Jake has defeated Captain Holt in the Halloween heist, the Captain asks him about the pigeons that Jake stuffed into the air conditioning vents during the heist.

Source version:

Captain Holt: What about the pigeons?

Jake: Oh, the grey pigeons? They were a red herring.

| |
|--|
| Card: Halloween 20 |
| Humorous load: Linguistic Element |
| Target version: Captain Holt: Entä pulut? Jake: Ne olivat hämäystä. |
| Humorous load: none |
| Figure 14. |

The joke is a good example of an untranslatable humorous instance in the case of English into Finnish translation. The humor of the scene lies in the term *red herring*, which in English means a misleading clue or distraction (though it can also mean the literal smoked herring as the fish turns red when smoked), and in the way Jake calls the pigeons “grey pigeons” and uses the same form of color adjective and animal as the term red herring does. In Finnish, however, there is no such word for a misleading clue and the word chosen by the translator in the subtitle is ‘hämäys’, which is roughly the Finnish equivalent to words such as bluff, trickery, and deception. Where in English this one, quick line hides a clever joke, in Finnish it is simply translated as Captain Holt asking about the pigeons and Jake telling him they were a deception and the humorous element is lost completely. Because there is no term for red herring in Finnish, Jake asking “oh, the grey pigeons?” has also been omitted because it would not bring anything of value into the translated line. This case of complete loss of humorous load is the only one of its kind that I identified in the chosen episodes, but it differs from many of the other scenes in that it only contains one pun, while most of the other scenes contain several different elements. While there are losses, significant ones even, in the other analyzed scenes, they usually contain some translatable element that can be transferred to the target version, minimizing the loss of humorous load.

In the next example several reasons have amounted to the target version having a significantly lower humorous load. The fast-paced dialogue with several characters speaking causes some problems here due to the spatio-temporal restrictions: not everything heard in the source version can be included in the target version, because there simply is not enough time and space. Linguistic factors play a great role in the subtitling process of this scene as well, because many of the nicknames are based on puns and other aspects of language, and in addition to this also cultural

factors come into play as not every person and character that is referenced here is well-known to the target public.

| |
|---|
| Card: Nicknames 12 |
| Series: Veep |
| Minute of episode: 05' 55" |
| Context: Selina asks her team about the various nicknames given to her by the public |
| Source Version |
| Gary: There's one that has to do with the legislation you did to support women breast feeding in public. |
| Selina: That was good legislation. |
| Gary: It was good legislation. Mammary Meyer. |
| Selina: Oh, please. |
| Amy: Like that. |
| Selina: Are there others? |
| Amy: Oh, really? Okay. Grizzly Madam, She-ra, Meyer the Liar, the Batcave, Pissface. |
| Mike: Wicked Witch of the West Wing, Veep Throat, VoldeMeyer, Dickless Van Dyke, Tawdry Hepburn, Blunder Woman, Selina Meh. |
| Selina: Pissface? Huh? |
| Gary: No, not that one. |
| Mike: Vaselina, Betty Poop. |
| Gary: People attack you because they think you're beautiful and you're smart. You got the most nicknames when you were on the cover of Vogue. I remember that. They were just jealous. Remember that? |
| [Selina smiles] |
| Amy: Yes. |
| Mike: They called you Goofy Smile. |
| Gary: Let's not get into it. |
| Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Community-Sense-of-Humor, Linguistic, Non-Marked, Visual Elements |

| |
|---|
| Target Version |
| Gary: Sait yhden, kun ajoit lakiehdotusta julkisen imettämisen puolesta. |
| Selina: Se oli hyvä lakiehdotus. |
| Gary: Niin oli. Maitorauhas-Meyer. |
| Selina: Älkää viitsikö. |
| Amy: Sellaisia nimityksiä. |
| Selina: Onko muitakin? |
| Amy: Haluat siis kuulla? Hyvä on. Karnea matami, She-ra, Valehtelija-Meyer, Lepakkoluola, Kusinaama. |
| Mike: Länsisiiven ilkeä noita, VP Throat, Voldemeyer, Rouva munaton, Aivoton apina, Mokamimmi, Selina Äh. |
| Selina: Kusinaama? |
| Gary: Ei sitä. |
| Mike: VaSelina, Kakka-Betty. |
| Gary: Ihmiset ilkkuvat, koska olet kaunis ja fiksu. Lempinimiä tuli eniten Vogue-kannen jälkeen. Muistan sen. He olivat kateellisia. Muistatko sen? |
| [Selina smiles] |
| Amy: Kyllä. |
| Mike: Olit Hönttihymy. |
| Gary: Ei puhuta siitä. |
| Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Community-Sense-of-Humor, Linguistic, Non-Marked, Visual |
| Figure 15. |

Presented here in Figure 15 is one of the key scenes of the episode, where Selina learns of her nicknames. The humorous load of the scene is heavy with several types of elements, in both source and target versions. While a good amount of the nicknames are plays on words with references to known people and characters, and are thus classified as Community-and-Institutions Elements, some are based on language (such as the alliterative names) and are naturally classified as Linguistic Elements. Some nicknames, such as the ones that include crude words or are sexual in nature, are Community-Sense-of-Humor Elements. It should be noted, that even though the

humorous load appears to be the same in both the source and target versions, due to linguistic and cultural differences many of the nicknames have been changed in the target version and the amounts of humorous elements are not equal.

The first nickname mentioned, “Mammary-Meyer”, is a good example of such a name that works similarly in both languages as it can be directly translated to ‘Maitorauhas-Meyer’. Both rely on alliteration. Another nickname of similar type is “Meyer the Liar”, which loosely rhymes in the source language but loses its Linguistic Element in the translation (‘Valehtelija-Meyer’). “Selina Meh” has been translated into ‘Selina Äh’, and while the meaning is the same, ‘Äh’ does not refer to Selina’s last name like “Meh” does. Thus, the Linguistic Element is lost. The Community-and-Institutions based puns “Vaselina”, a play on Vaseline, and “VoldeMeyer”, a play on the name of the Harry Potter villain Voldemort, have not been changed for the translation because both Vaseline and Voldemort are known to the Finnish public in their original forms, and thus the nicknames work in the cultural space of the target audience. In both cases also a Linguistic Element is present, as they are portmanteaus of Vaseline and Selina and Voldemort and Meyer, respectively. Other names, however, have been translated to completely differ from the source material. Both “Dickless Van Dyke” and “Tawdry Hepburn”, which refer to actors Dick Van Dyke and Audrey Hepburn, have been translated to ‘Rouva Munaton’ (literally: Mrs Dickless) and ‘Aivoton apina’ (literally: brainless monkey). While ‘Munaton’ literally means “dickless”, the Community-and-Institutions element is lost in the translation as the target version term does not refer to any person or character. The same issue is present with ‘Aivoton apina’, which just means a brainless monkey. This name, however, gains a Linguistic Element as it is alliterative, but the Community-and-Institutions element is lost nevertheless. With “Blunder Woman”, a reference to the DC superhero Wonder Woman, the Community-and-Institutions Element is lost as well, but a Linguistic Element gained with the again alliterative translation ‘Mokamimmi’. The name “Wicked Witch of the West Wing” has also been directly translated into ‘Länsisiiven ilkeä noita’, and the nickname works quite similarly in both versions. It can be argued, however, that the Finnish public is not quite as familiar with the original L. Frank Baum character, the Wicked Witch of the West, who goes by the name of ‘Lännen ilkeä noita’ in the Finnish translations, and West Wing, though rarely translated, is ‘länsisiipi’ in Finnish.

“Veep Throat”, a rather crude reference to the term deep throat, which is sexual in nature, can be classified as both Community-Sense-of-Humor and Linguistic Element in the source version, but in the target version it loses both elements as it is simply left untranslated, yet it appears in the subtitles as ‘VP Throat’. Even with the English knowledge required to understand “Veep Throat” this pun might not reach the target audience as they would likely read it ‘Vee-Pee’ instead of “Veep”. To understand this pun the target audience has to actually hear it being said and make the connection to the English language term, and in order to successfully complete this task, a rather high level of knowledge of English is required of the viewer. With “Betty Poop” being translated into ‘Kakka-Betty’ the Community-and-Institutions Element is lost as well and the target version term makes little sense, though the meaning is the same (literally: Poop-Betty). While Finnish viewers are likely to know the cartoon character of Betty Boop, ‘Kakka-Betty’ does not sound alike translated and the clear connection of the source version is lost. The Linguistic Element is also missing in the translation, and all in all the nickname does not make much sense in the target version. However, some of the nicknames are simply not puns or references at all, such as “Pissface”, which is the one to catch Selina’s attention in the scene. This name appears as ‘Kusinaama’ in the target version, which is a literal translation and classified as a Non-Marked Element in both versions. It stands out from the list as just a mean name without any pun or joke hidden in it. The final nickname mentioned in the scene is “Goofy Smile”, which could be classified as a Community-and-Institutions Element if we assume that the public is referring to the Walt Disney character Goofy, or just simply as a Non-Marked Element, assuming that the public only means that Selina has a goofy smile. The latter assumption has been made in the target version as the nickname is translated as ‘Hönttihymy’. In addition to the humorous elements mentioned, a Visual Element is also present in the scene. When Gary tells Selina that people are jealous of her because she is beautiful and smart and got various new nicknames after appearing in the cover of *Vogue*, Selina smiles, and this is when Mike tells her that the public called her Goofy smile following the release of the magazine. The viewers see Selina’s smile fade, and then Gary tells Mike not to talk about it.

As mentioned, the humorous load appears to be the same in both versions, but when put into numbers, it is clear that there is significant loss of humorous load. For example, out of the nine Community-and-Institutions based nicknames only four appear in the target version as Community-

and-Institutions nicknames, and out of the four Linguistic based nicknames (without an overlapping Community-and-Institutions element) only one (“Mammary-Meyer”/‘Maitorauhas-Meyer’) can be found in the target version. Also six nicknames that contain some other element than Non-Marked in the source version contain no identifiable element other than the Non-Marked Element in the target version, even though they have been translated. For example, whereas “Grizzly Madam”, a reference to the 1972 novel character Grizzly Adams, contains the Community-and-Institutions Element (as well as a Linguistic Element since it is a pun), it simply appears as ‘karmea matami’ (literally: grisly madam, but with no relation to the character who is not well-known in Finland) in the target version. This translated nickname contains no Community-and-Institutions or Linguistic Element and can only be categorized as a Non-Marked Element.

The next humorous instance, presented here in Figure 16, suffers loss due to the reductions made by the subtitler.

| |
|--|
| Card: The Vic Allen Dinner 14 |
| Series: Veep |
| Minute of episode: 05’ 22” |
| Context: Mike is on the phone explaining that Selina was simply multitasking in the photograph which shows Selina using her phone during a hostage crisis |
| Source version: |
| Mike: She was multitasking. |
| Selina: You need to get off the phone. |
| Mike: It’s a thing women can do, like smelling nice and wrapping gifts. |
| Selina [grabs the phone and hangs up]: Okay. |
| Mike: Bye, Tom. |
| Humorous load: Community-Sense-of-Humor, Non-Marked, Visual Elements |
| Target version: |
| Mike: Hän teki montaa asiaa kerralla. Naiset ovat siinä hyviä. |
| Selina [grabs the phone and hangs up] |
| Mike: Hei hei, Tom! |

Card: The Vic Allen Dinner 14

Humorous load: Non-Marked, Visual Elements

Figure 16.

The humor in this scene lies on Mike's lines during a telephone conversation with someone named Tom. The viewer knows from the context that Mike is trying to excuse Selina's use of her phone during the hostage negotiation, and argues that she was multitasking, which he then goes on to explain is something that women can do and gives the comical example of "like smelling nice and wrapping gifts." This remark is categorized as Community-Sense-of-Humor, but it is not the only humorous element in the scene. The Non-Marked Element is shown in Selina's behavior and the way she tells Mike to get off the phone, only to have Mike ignore her. The Visual Element comes into play when the viewer sees Selina march over to Mike, grab the phone and hang up, which leads to Mike yelling "Bye, Tom!" To the phone which is already in Selina's hand. In the target version, however, the Community-Sense-of-Humor Element is lost because Mike's explanation of multitasking is left out and replaced with him saying 'Hän teki monta asiaa kerralla. Naiset ovat siinä hyviä', literally: "she was doing several things at once. Women are good at it." Selina telling Mike to end the call is also left untranslated, but the target audience still gains a similar understanding of the scene because of the Visual Element. It can be heard that Selina says something, and judging by the actions that follow it is clear to the viewer that she wanted Mike to hang up the phone. The humorous load of the target version suffers loss because of this. The lines, however, have not been left untranslated because of linguistic differences or other translational difficulties, but rather most likely because of the spatio-temporal factors of subtitling, or even due to the fact that the subtitler did not deem these omitted lines important enough to include in the target version.

These three humorous instances, as presented in Figures 14-16, suffer the most loss of humorous load out of the chosen 16 instances, and only one of the three is completely untranslatable. More untranslated humorous instances do occur in the chosen episodes, however, also the amount of straightforward, completely translatable instances is greater. This will be examined in the next section as I concentrate on the findings of this study.

4.4. COMPARISON OF HUMOR IN THE TWO SERIES

As I mentioned previously, the types of humor portrayed in *Veep* and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* are very different, and in this section I will analyze two scenes (one per series) that contain similar topics and have a similar (original) humorous load. Despite the fact that *Veep* and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* are both American half-hour comedies set in a branch of government (federal government and federal law enforcement, respectively) these two series contain very different types of humor drawn from very different topics. It is, of course, important to keep in mind the age restrictions (TV-MA for *Veep* and PG-13 for *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*) and the issue of one being a political satire while the other is a police procedural comedy; these two television series do not aim for similar type of humor, but for the purpose of this study I will point out some of the main differences in the form of a short analysis, conducted in the same form as the previously analyzed humorous instances in section 4.

The examples of humor are presented below in Figures 17 and 18. The humorous instances can be found in the *Veep* episode “The Vic Allen Dinner” and the *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* episode “Halloween”.

| |
|--|
| Card: The Vic Allen Dinner 04 |
| Series: Veep |
| Minute of episode: 01’ 23” |
| Context: Selina is worried that she will have to interact with amputees at an event. |
| Source version: Selina: Oh, there are not gonna be any veterans at this teen prayer breakfast thing tomorrow, are there? Amy: No, ma’am. No missing legs. |
| Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Community-Sense-of-Humor, Non-Marked Elements |
| Target version: Selina: Eihän huomiselle rukousaamiaiselle tule sotaveteraaneja..? |

| |
|---|
| Card: The Vic Allen Dinner 04 |
| Amy: Ei. Kaikilla on jalat tallella. |
| Humorous load: Community-Sense-of-Humor, Non-Marked Elements |
| Figure 17. |

Even though both of these scenes include almost the same type of humorous elements, the humor remains very different. In the *Veep* example, the character of Selina is disturbed by the thought of having to interact with an army veteran who has possibly lost a leg. The viewers recognize this behavior as a character trait of Selina, because her dislike or even phobia of amputated limbs is addressed in several episodes throughout the series. The reference to the United States Armed Forces form the Community-and-Institutions Element, but it is not so clear in the target version because to the average Finnish viewer the U.S. Armed Forces and American veterans do not represent any clear institution. The cultural differences between the Finnish Army and that of the United States are significant. Firstly, to Finnish people, a veteran would typically mean someone who served in the Winter and/or Continuation War in the 1930s and 1940s, but for Americans a veteran is any soldier or member of the United States Armed Forces who has served in any of the country's wars at any given time. Secondly, while some of the Finnish viewers are aware of the ongoing wars in which the United States participates, it is not common knowledge in the sense that a Finnish viewer could be assumed to have enough information to view the U.S. Armed Forces as an Institution. In the target version, the joke is simply classified as a Community-Sense-of-Humor Element due to its sensitive topic of war veterans and amputated legs. Naturally in the target version the Community-Sense-of-Humor Element is present in addition to the Community-and-Institutions Element.

The Non-Marked Element, present in both versions, is Amy's answer to Selina's rather indirect inquiry about any possible veterans attending the breakfast: without mentioning missing legs, Amy knows that it is what Selina means. These jokes and references are rather crude in the sense that the target of the joke is quite literally veterans with missing legs and Selina's disgust for them. Stereotypically patriotic Americans, veterans or people of the Armed Forces might easily find this type of joking insensitive, but this example just goes to show that the humor in *Veep* is not for everybody.

| |
|---|
| Card: Halloween 02 |
| Series: Brooklyn Nine-Nine |
| Minute of episode: 01' 05" |
| Context: Due to Halloween, the holding cell of the precinct is packed with people dressed up as different people and characters. |
| Source version: Jake: The holding cell's completely full. I keep having to separate Hillary Clinton and Kim Jong-Un. [Cut to Jake separating two people dressed as Hillary Clinton and Kim Jong-Un] Jake: Stop it! Stop making out! Hey, no! What would Bill say? |
| Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Community-Sense-of-Humor, Visual Elements |
| Target version: Jake: Selli on täynnä. Hillary Clintonia ja Kim Jong-Unia saa vahtia koko ajan. [Cut to Jake separating two people dressed as Hillary Clinton and Kim Jong-Un] Jake: Lopettakaa nuoleskelu! Mitä Billkin sanoisi? |
| Humorous load: Community-and-Institutions, Community-Sense-of-Humor, Visual Elements |
| Figure 18. |

In *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, similar topics (in this case, government and its employees) are handled much differently. In the example, presented in Figure 18, the character of Jake notes that the holding cell of the precinct is full and that he needs keep separating two people dressed up as the politician and former First Lady and presidential nominee Hillary Clinton and the infamous dictator, Supreme Leader of North Korea, Kim Jong-Un. The viewer can see the characters passionately kissing in the holding cell as the scene cuts briefly, and Jake tells them to “stop making out” and asks “what would Bill say?” in a reference to Hillary Clinton’s husband, former President Bill Clinton. All of the aforementioned politicians are well-known around the world, including Finland, so the Community-and-Institutions Element is present in the target version, as is the Community-Sense-of-Humor Element, which is the very unlikely scenario of these two characters kissing. By

choosing to reference very well-known people and characters, these kinds of jokes in *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* are generally easily translated into multiple languages. When it comes to Community-Sense-of-Humor, the topics in *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* typically have to do with sexual themes, unlike in *Veep*, where these topics range from amputees to suicide. Even in the range of jokes that are sexual in nature, *Veep* is often on the crude end of the spectrum. Whereas in *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* these jokes have to do with double innuendos, two unlikely characters kissing, or the “title of your sex tape” gag, in *Veep* they are crude insults, jokes regarding prostitutes in woodchippers and sexual harassment in the workplace. Though on-screen nudity is portrayed in neither of these series, it is the language that makes all the difference.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Here I will present the findings of my analysis and draw the appropriate conclusions regarding the translation of humorous elements in the chosen two TV-series. For this purpose I have created a table listing all of the humorous elements identified within the four episodes.

A total of 16 humorous instances were analyzed in the previous section. Eight of these suffered no loss of humorous load, as presented in subsection 4.1, five instances suffered some loss of humorous load, as showcased in subsection 4.2, and finally in subsection 4.3, three such instances were presented in which significant loss of humorous load occurred. These numbers, though small and thus not able to convey the actual percentages of humor lost in translation, still relate directly to the findings of this study. Most of the elements translate from the source to the target language without a problem, while others suffer some amount of loss without erasing too much of the original, and the rest, which are a minority, are either untranslatable or left untranslated. The concrete numbers of all identified elements are presented in the following table. The series are examined separately because of the sheer differences in the humor they contain, as mentioned in the previous sections, but no distinction between the episodes has been made: the numbers of *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* contain the humorous instances of both “Halloween” and “Yippie Kayak”, and the same applies to *Veep* and its episodes. For the purpose of saving space within the table, the longer titles of the elements have been shortened, with *C-and-I* signifying Community-and-Institutions Elements and *C-S-of-H* indicating Community-Sense-of-Humor Elements.

| | <i>Brooklyn Nine-Nine</i> Source Version | <i>Brooklyn Nine-Nine</i> Target Version | <i>Veep</i> Source Version | <i>Veep</i> Target Version |
|----------------|---|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| C-and-I | 12 | 12 (100%) | 22 | 19 (86%) |
| C-S-of-H | 13 | 12 (92%) | 42 | 36 (85%) |
| Linguistic | 11 | 5 (45%) | 14 | 4 (28%) |
| Paralinguistic | 1 | 0 (0%) | 1 | 1 (100%) |
| Non-Marked | 34 | 34 (100%) | 48 | 43 (89%) |
| Total | 71 | 63 (88%) | 127 | 103 (81%) |

Based on the analysis as well as this table it is safe to say that Linguistic Elements were typically the most troublesome when it comes to humor translation. In both shows significantly less Linguistic Elements appear in the target versions, with five out of eleven elements translated in *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* and four out of fourteen in *Veep*, which is 45% and 28%, respectively. Due to the limitations of subtitles these jokes are difficult to replace with another type of joke and the fact is, at least in the case of *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* and *Veep*, that the translated target versions have a significantly lower humorous load when it comes to the linguistic aspects of humor.

In *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* both Community-and-Institutions Elements as well as Non-Marked Elements retain the same load in the target versions. The types of references that are made in the show typically translate well from English into Finnish and, more importantly, work in both the original American and the target nation cultures. In *Veep*, however, both types suffer some loss in the target versions, with 19 out of the 22 Community-and-Institutions Elements (86%) and 43 out of 48 Non-Marked Elements (89%) appearing in the target version. The Non-Marked Elements were mostly left out due to the spatio-temporal factors, and to some extent this applies to the Community-and-Institutions Elements as well, but these types of elements were also left out because the references were either unfamiliar to the target audience or unnecessary to include in terms of plot development; or in some cases, both of these things. As mentioned before, despite their many similarities these two shows differ greatly when it comes to humor. Whereas the references made in the frame of the Community-and-Institutions Elements were all translatable and translated in the *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* episodes, this was not the case for *Veep*.

A similar effect can be found when examining the Community-Sense-of-Humor Elements. In *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, only one such element did not transfer to the target version due to spatio-temporal factors, while in *Veep* six out of the original 42 were left out of the Finnish subtitled version. In other words, 85% of the Community-Sense-of-Humor Elements were translated. Most of the ones that were left out were vulgar jokes or other expletive-laden lines that could either not be fit into the subtitles, or were omitted due to them being unnecessary in regard to plot-advancement. This is one key issue in the translation and subtitling of comedy: when a character's line includes both necessary information as well as a joke, the humorous element must be omitted if there is no space for both of them in the subtitles. In the case of *Veep*, the dialogue is rather quick compared to *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*. For example, the average episode of *Veep* will be two to three minutes longer

than an episode of *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, but the scripts of the *Veep* episodes typically contain almost a thousand words more. I will note that the scripts that I have examined originally contain the lines spoken by the characters with some added descriptions of speech, but for the purpose of this study I have edited everything besides the actual spoken lines out of the scripts in order to get a true word count for the episodes. The scripts may be found on several websites, but I personally found those uploaded on the website sublikescript.com to be accurate and suitable for my needs. The script of the “Nicknames” episode contains 4341 words and the runtime of the episode is 25 minutes, while “Halloween” is 22 minutes long with a 3514-word script. This shows how *Veep* indeed contains quite a bit more dialogue and thus more of its content will be omitted in the subtitled target version. Therefore, even though the Community-Sense-of-Humor Elements typically do translate without a problem from English into Finnish, in some cases the jokes will simply not make it to the target version due to other constraints that are not based in linguistic or cultural aspects. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, this applies to the Non-Marked Elements of the *Veep* episodes as well.

Martínez-Sierra (2005) concludes in his study that most humor is indeed translatable, however, a shared background of the source and target cultures is essential (p. 294). My analysis supports this conclusion, because most of the humorous elements of the original versions are found in the target versions as well. In this case, where the source culture is that of the United States and the target culture Finnish, not too many culture-specific humorous elements were left untranslated, and if they were, it was due to spatio-temporal restrictions rather than untranslatability due to cultural differences.

Jankowska (2009) points out that regardless of language or method of translation, the target versions tend to contain less humorous elements than the source versions. Jankowska (2009) argues that “[t]he quantitative loss of the humorous load in the translated texts in general is 10%” (n.p.). This indeed is a fact: in my analysis or in the four similar studies (Martínez-Sierra, 2005, Jankowska, 2009, Kianbakht 2016, Zolczer, 2016) referenced in this thesis, not a single instance occurred in which the final humorous load remained the same in the target version as in the original. The dubbed versions generally had higher counts of humorous elements than the subtitled versions, largely due to the spatio-temporal factors and the fact that in dubbing the translations do not have to be as accurate because the dubbed audio replaces the original.

The findings of Kianbakht (2016) are similar to mine and Jankowska's (2009), as Kianbakht (2016) notes the proportional loss of the humorous elements to be almost 36% in English-to-Persian subtitling of the series *Malcolm in the Middle* (p. 75). Kianbakht (2016) states that 100% of the Non-Marked Elements identified in *Malcolm in the Middle* are found in the Persian subtitles, whereas only 8% of the Paralinguistic Elements are present in the target version. 52% of Linguistic Elements can be found in the Persian subtitled version (p. 75), which is a little more than can be identified in the Finnish subtitled *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* episodes (45%). In comparison, only 28% of Linguistic Elements can be identified in the Finnish subtitled *Veep* episodes. Paralinguistic Elements are few and far between in both *Veep* and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, which is why reliable percentages concerning these elements cannot be presented in this study. In order to do so, more episodes including Paralinguistic Elements would have to be included in the analysis.

Zolczer (2016) concludes that reliable generalizations cannot be formed due to the limited number of analyzed humorous scenes (25) included in his study, but that “a summary of the changes in the humorous load of the scenes in the target language versions might be useful in forming hypotheses about the translation of humour in AVT” (p. 90). Zolczer (2016, p. 90) also points out an important phenomenon that needs to be considered when comparing the humorous loads of the source and target versions, this being the change in the type of the elements. Zolczer (2016, p. 90) argues that even if the number of the humorous elements remains the same in both the source and target versions, the type of the elements can differ, which in turn “makes it difficult to compare with the original, since different types of humorous elements might evoke different degrees of humorous effect” (p. 90). This is the case in the scene presented in Figure 14 where the *Veep* characters are talking about the nicknames given to the character of Selina by the public. Where in the original the nickname of “Blunder Woman” is a reference to the superhero character of Wonder Woman and is thus classified as a Community-and-Institutions Element, in the target version the nickname has been translated into ‘Mokamimmi’, which holds no reference to the superhero and takes on a linguistic, alliterative form instead. While one element is lost and another gained, the humorous load does not change, but the humorous effect is different. In such cases it is impossible to state which version of the element is then better or funnier, as it depends solely on the personal opinions of the viewer. Comparing the humorous effects in these cases is unnecessary, because more often

than not the viewer skilled in both languages will either accept the joke they heard or joke they read as the preferred alternative. It could be assumed that most viewers will prefer the original line, but I personally have had experiences where I have preferred a particularly clever translation; it simply cannot be stated as a fact which version the viewers will prefer, and I would go as far as to deem it pointless to try and prove one or the other better.

As shown in Table 1, 88% of all the humorous elements identified in the two *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* episodes and 81% of the elements identified in the *Veep* episodes can be found in the subtitled Finnish versions of the series. Despite the differences in humor and script-length, the final numbers are similar. In the beginning I assumed that more elements would be omitted from the *Veep* translations, but I am glad to find that it is not the case, and that the target version remains so close to the original. As I mentioned before, the results of this study coincide with those of Martínez-Sierra (2005) despite the different target languages, and in the case of English-to-Finnish humor translation a surprising amount of humor is indeed perfectly translatable.

7. CONCLUSION

Earlier in section 3 I quoted Jankowska (2009) stating how “[i]t is very often said that humor does not travel well” (n.p.). This is something I would like to address again. Whereas some types of humor, such as humor based on linguistic aspects, is difficult and sometimes even impossible to translate, it seems to me that *most* humor indeed does travel quite comfortably across cultures and languages. Surely it depends on what one constitutes as “traveling well”; some might argue that a joke has to remain completely unchanged in order for it to have traveled well, but others might be perfectly fine with it changing a little on the way. As demonstrated in this study by thoroughly analyzing eighteen humorous instances from the two comedy series *Veep* and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, over 80% of the humor was translated and present in the target versions in three out of four element categories. The category of Paralinguistic Elements is left out due to only one such joke appearing in both series, and the fourth category in which the translation percentages are lower than 80% is that of the aforementioned Linguistic Elements. I am also eager to point out that in the case of *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* a full 100% of the humorous elements in two categories, Community-and-Institutions Elements and Non-Marked Elements, are identifiable in the Finnish target versions. Examining these numbers as shown in Table 1, I find it difficult to state as a fact that humor is somehow particularly difficult to translate.

I firmly believe that had I chosen different episodes for this study, the results would have been very similar. Of course some variation would most likely have occurred had I chosen the best-rated or the worst-rated episodes of the series, but by picking episodes that represent the good average of the series, the findings can be viewed as a more reliable indicator of the shows’ humor and the translatability of it. However, I am not hesitant to state that the results of this study would have been more reliable had I examined a greater number of episodes, for example, half of all the episodes that aired by the time of writing this thesis. The results most likely would not have differed much of the percentages presented in Table 1, but the reliability would have been stronger. Had I examined different translations of the series, the results could have been different. For example, *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* is at the moment of my writing accessible to the Finnish audience on the streaming service Netflix, where the subtitles for the episodes are different from the ones that I have analyzed in this study. In fact, comparing different translations of the same episodes would make for an

interesting subject of analysis, now that different subtitlers provide subtitles for different platforms (DVD and Blu-Ray, streaming services, television). In my experience the subtitles provided for a network, like the ones analyzed in this study, are more often than not more *thoroughly* translated in the sense that for example film and book titles appear as their translated forms rather than with their original titles, which seems to be the case for many of the other types of subtitles (mainly those provided for Netflix). This claim is only based on what I have personally witnessed as a viewer of both network-television and streaming services, but it could make for an interesting subject of study, especially now that we seem to be living in the golden age of streaming services.

To the question that I posed in the introduction concerning the subtitles' ability to convey everything of the original, the answer is no. The subtitles, one or two lines of text that stay on the screen for three to six seconds, cannot possibly include all of the information of the original. There is typically much more dialogue than there is space and time for the subtitles, so to include each original spoken line and possible translations of graphics is simply impossible. However, the purpose of subtitles is not to convey everything; it is to convey *enough*. More often than not the two lines of text on the screen are indeed able to do just that. Audiovisual translation methods, in this case subtitling, together with some degree of shared cultural experience and background, make it possible for audiences effortlessly and above all *successfully* enjoy foreign comedy series without much or any knowledge of the original language.

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